"THE PRICE OF HER BETRAYAL"---A SHORT STORY

"MISS SHERLOCK TAKES A HAND"---A NEW SERIAL

CHICAGO LEDGER

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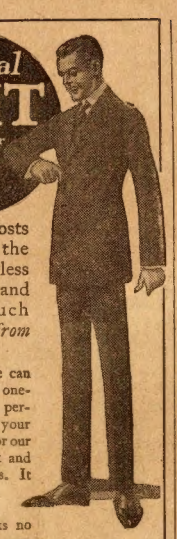

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His Bandaged Eye

"NEVER," said the young person in the becoming serge dress, "never, as long as I live, shall I interfere again with dear mother, or insist on her doing something that she doesn't want to! To think what a fuss I made because she wouldn't wear glasses!"

"Does she need 'em?" politely inquired the girl with the curly hair.

The young person in the serge gown coughed gently. "Well," she replied, "that depends on one's point of view! I really believe that mother was quite right when she kept insisting that her eyes were normal, and I was foolish and stubborn to claim that she was blind as a bat beyond a radius of one foot from her face."

"It is perfectly surprising the way her vision works. The more I think about it the more thankful I am that she has firmly refused to take my advice. With her young face it would be a pity to——"

"What is this essay going to be about?" impatiently inquired the curly-haired one.

"Well!" said the girl in the serge dress, settling herself, "you know how interested all of us are in the dances and parties given for the soldiers and how regularly we have gone. Mother had received letters from her old town out West asking her to be nice to Carl Gaswinks, who was the son of somebody she knew and who was in training here. I approved of Carl. He turned out to be good-looking and equally nice, and it wasn't a particle hard to do our duty by him.

"Mother asked him out to Sunday dinners and had him stay over night whenever he could, and we were perfectly thrilled to have a real fighter in the family. At least, it was nice until I decided that Carl was not my affinity, at the precise moment when he made up his mind that the girl he should leave behind was going to be me.

"You see, our decisions didn't jibe and how could I dodge him? You can't dodge a man you meet every Saturday night at a dance and who is roaming around your own house by twenty-four hours after, and I begged mother to stop inviting him. She was very indignant, and said I had no heart when the poor boy was going over there to fight for us—which wasn't quite to the point.

"So you can imagine how relieved I was to find that Carl wasn't at the last dance. I almost thought he was there, but the man turned out to be an utter stranger. He had a bandage draped around one end of his forehead, due to an accident in camp, and with it he did look surprisingly like Carl. But oh, my dear! He was so different! He was just wonderful! Tall[illegible]red, clever——"

"I know," interrupted the curly-haired one. "Each soldier you meet is that way!"

"No such thing!" declared the girl in the serge. "I tell you, this man was absolutely different! I'm not saying that he was taken with me, too. I merely mention that he danced with me about eight times. Mother quite beamed at me. 'You seem to be having a very good time,' she said significantly, and I said rapturously that I was. 'Isn't he perfectly splendid?' I asked her, because I had to ask something. She looked kind of queer and said he certainly was.

"Imagine my joy when my man asked to escort me home—and I let him drive out in our car with us all. I was so glad to find that mother evidently liked him, too, because she chatted so fluently and kindly with him. Usually she hangs back when I usher a new man on parade before the family. As father unlocked the door and my hero started to say good night, mother turned to him casually.

"'Dear me!' she expostulated, 'you're never going to try and get back to camp tonight? Why, you're going to stay here, of course! Don't be foolish!' She literally shoved the young man into the house in the midst of his polite protests, and while I marveled at her extreme cordiality, I didn't say a word.

"Time counts, and we don't have any too much time these days with the nice young men we meet! Perhaps mother realized that, too, and was trying to help. We had a perfectly lovely time all the next day, and found that we agreed on everything from golf to H. G. Wells.

"And it was not until long after Sunday dinner that mother addressed him as Carl, and he looked interested and wanted to know how she had happened to know that his second name was indeed Carl. Then explanations broke. Dear mother had been under the impression all along that she was entertaining Carl Gaswinks, as usual, instead of Richard Carl Phipps, as it was.

"And she could no more unentertain him then than she could unscramble an egg! And to make it smoothed down and all right she had to ask him for the next week end—so you can see how impressed I am with the fact that mother doesn't in the least need glasses and I regret ever urging them upon her! Of course, I never dreamed she did not know Richard Carl was a stranger——"

"Pooh!" said the curly-haired one. "I'll bet you took mighty good care to neglect formal introductions when you got into the car to drive home!"

"Well," said the young person in the serge dress, "I always was absent-minded, you know! If you could see his eyes!"

When You Meet Celebrities

"I met a very distinguished man this afternoon," announced the landlady, with pardonable pride. "I called at Mrs. Toplofty's and was introduced to Professor Sardine, who is visiting the family a few days, he being distantly related to Mrs. Toplofty. The professor has been decorated by several monarchs for his scientific services and is a great man, but he seemed very dull to me. I couldn't get him to talk about anything but the weather."

"That's usually the way with celebrities, Mrs. Jiggers," said the star boarder. "If celebrities were wise they'd go and spend their lives on some remote island, where the common people would never see or hear them. There they might wear their halos in peace and comfort and never be obliged to admit that they are a total loss.

"At one time Oliver Goldsmith was the most popular author in England. Everybody read him, admired and loved him. There was something in his dope that made the reader want to meet him and tell him what a corker he was. Accordingly people went to a great deal of trouble to be introduced to him. And when they had met and conversed with him they went to the corner drug store and asked the clerk to mix up something that would take the taste out of their mouths. For Goldsmith, personally, was about as interesting as a $7 phonograph with the mainspring broken.

"Three or four years ago a celebrated explorer came to town and delivered a lecture. He had been pushing himself around the waste places of the earth and had been up against every peril that has been cataloged. He had been chased by lions and treed by crocodiles. He had fallen over precipices and had been shipwrecked and lost in the desert and everything you can think of, my dear Mrs. Jiggers.

"I always had a passionate admiration for heroic men, and I considered it the greatest honor of my life when I was introduced to this intrepid man after the lecture. I was flush at that time and money was no object to me. So I invited him to take a ride with me the next morning and see our beautiful city.

"He accepted the invitation and I chartered the best auto I could get, with a driver who used to be a professional racer. I instructed the driver to show the explorer a touch of high life and not disgust him with too much deference to the speed laws.

"Well, I have ridden in autos with some timid, nervous old women at divers times and occasions, but I never saw such a rabbit as that dauntless explorer, who had dragged elephants from their holes by the tail. If we speeded up to twelve miles an hour he'd try to jump out of the car, and every time we ran around a corner he screamed. I was going to haul him around all forenoon, but twenty minutes was all I could stand."

She Had Branded Him a Quitter

BLAIR J. BIXBY had failed, and he was ready to give up and go back to the Sunny South he knew—and he wanted to take the girl with him, for he knew that she loved him as he loved her. But the girl? With biting sarcasm and plain words she told him she could never marry a quitter and she gave him his choice of going out to a new country and making a man of himself or of giving her up forever. Bixby went to Oklahoma in its most dangerous days and he—But you will not want to know what happened. It is told in a masterful story, "The Quitter Who Didn't," the first installment of which will appear in the Ledger next week.

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The Price of Her Betrayal

By William MacLeod Raine

An "unloaded" rifle had killed the bully. One of two persons had reasons for wishing him dead. Each confessed to the crime. Which one was the avenger?

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I.

HORSTMAN swung his quirt twice across the shoulders of Juan Ortiga. "I'll learn you to crowd me outa the picture when it's my scene, you little wienerwurst!" he shouted, spurring nearer.

The Mexican boy had given an involuntary cry of pain, but his dark eyes gleamed as he faced the man who took the heavy villain parts for the border company of the Lunar Film people.

"You no touch me again!" he warned, trying to control the dancing of his excited horse.

"Like hell I won't!"

The descending quirt missed the rider and fell across the flank of the pony.

"Quit it, you coward!" ordered a voice, sharply.

The big man swung round in his saddle. "Who said that?" he demanded.

"I did."

A short, brown-faced man in plain shiny chaps had slipped from his roan and was moving forward. Horstman, bully and bruiser, was for the moment dumb with surprise.

"And I'm standing pat on it," added the cow puncher.

"This any o' your business, Jerry Winant?"

"I'm making it mine. Let that kid alone. Pick on me if you got to pester some one. I'm man size, anyhow."

The heavy was out of his saddle before Winant had finished speaking. His eyes narrowed as he slouched forward. Horstman in his day had been a third-rate pugilist.

"Fine! Suits me down to the ground. I've been aimin' to give you a whaling for quite some time. It's on the way now," he boasted.

Roady McCarty, who had been away rounding up the remuda, arrived just as the fight began. He was a short, bandy-legged man in high-heeled boots and gray flannel shirt. A perpetual apology for being alive seemed to rest on his homely unfinished face. Into the little circle that surrounded the fighters he crowded beside Juan.

It took Horstman less than five minutes to put Winant down for the third time. The beaten man either could not or would not rise.

"Had enough?" the victor wanted to know, kicking his ribs.

From a bruised and bleeding face the sullen eyes of Winant glared hate.

Juan trembled with a furious, impotent anger. His fingers crept to the property dagger he was wearing. The hand of Roady closed on his wrist gently but powerfully.

"Don't you!" he whispered.

The pugilist again kicked the prostrate man.

Roady rubbed the palm of his free hand helplessly across an unshaven jaw. He opened his mouth to protest. "I don' reckon I'd do that-a-way, Pete," he suggested mildly.

Savagely the big man whirled. "Another buttinski, eh? You lookin' for trouble?"

The horse wrangler took off the old discolored hat he wore and scratched the brindle thatch that ran like a mop over his head. "Course I ain't. Me, I'm a man o' peace. I don't aim to quarrel with nobody, as the old sayin' is. But you don't want to pick on a feller that's down, now do you, Pete?"

His conciliatory grin appeared to infuriate Horstman, who moved slowly toward him with head down and coin salient.

"Good enough! I'll whale one that ain't down yet," he growled.

The bandy-legged range rider backed away. "Now, don't you, Pete—don't you! I ain't no scrapper. All I said was you hadn't ought to——"

"I heard what you said."

The bully lashed out and caught McCarty flush on the cheek. Roady's face flew signals of surprise and protest. He drew a handkerchief from a hip pocket and wiped the blood away. His aggrieved voice held a pained complaint.

"Now, look-a-here, Pete, doggone it——"

Horstman struck again. With a motion quicker than that of a card sharp Roady's hand flew up and caught the wrist of the bruiser. He flung all his strength into a sudden twist, and with a howl of pain the bully catapulted against the side of the stable.

The heavy picked himself up, cursing, and nursed his arm. "You like to 'a' broke it!" he whined furiously.

"Once in a while that holt does," agreed Roady, pleasantly. The ingratiating lost puppy look, that had for an instant been sponged from his face by the need of action, was again asking not to be rebuffed. "Sorry if I hurt you, Pete. Mebbe I was hasty. But you know me. I ain't ever lookin' for trouble, as the old sayin' is."

The red-hot eyes of the humiliated heavyweight rested on him. "I'm going to lick the tar outa you onct my arm gets good again. Stick a pin in that, Mr. Roady Buttinski McCarty."

The Descending Quirt Missed the Rider and Fell Across the Flanks of the Pony.

"I don't reckon you will, Pete, after you mill it over. Me, I'm a peaceful citizen, not wantin' no bad feelin' with nobody——"

A man stepped briskly into view around the corner of the barn.

"All ready for that hacienda set, boys. We'll shoot it before lunch. Got your location chosen exactly, Dillon?"

The camera man nodded. "Yep. All staked out."

"Good! Get right to it. After lunch we'll do the execution scene. Your guns loaded, Collins? All the costumes ready?"

"Everything fixed except the sombreros Roady was going to dress up, Mr. Keating," replied the property man.

Sam Keating, producing director of the border Lunar Company that was producing the Apache brand of film, saw a good deal that he chose to ignore. His impassive eyes were unconscious of the bleeding faces of two of his riders.

"Take a look at them soon as you're thru lunch, Roady. I don't want the scene crabbed by poor detail. Now boys, get busy."

The circle broke up at once.

II.

Roady hurried thru his lunch and walked over to the studio to get the sombreros ready by the time they were needed. Jerry Winant was leaning on the fence outside the big Lunar studio. He began to whistle "Tipperary" when he caught sight of McCarty.

The bandy-legged horse wrangler grinned. "Oh, you Jerry! Some lamp you're wearing. Trade you a cut cheek for two busted lips and a black eye," he proposed genially.

The other Lunar rider cursed. "I'll get even with him. He's a devil—Horstman is. I could tell you things——"

The man stopped abruptly. Plainly the thought had occurred to him that he was saying too much.

"Ever meet him before you came here?" asked Roady.

Winant looked quickly at him, then

looked away. "No, but he's a mangy son-of-a-gun—b'iled in meanness—any one can see that."

The bitterness in his voice surprised Roady. After all, a licking is only a licking. The Irish puncher's system had absorbed several in the course of a fairly active career.

"Oh, well, I'm noways hostile to a man because he carries a good punch in his mitt. Not a-tall. But there's no use in Pete's going around with a chip on his shoulder. And he hadn't ought-a pick on little fellows like Juan." Roady rubbed his lank chin caressingly and changed the subject. "I gotta git a move on me and fix them Chihuahua hats. See you later, Jerry."

Wingnt attacked again the chorus of "Tipperary" as McCarty moved toward the studio. Among his other duties Roady was a sort of assistant property man.

He unlocked the door of the property-room, collected the sombreros upon which he was going to sew the silver trimming, and carried them to a side porch. Here he set to work.

The hats were ready by the time Keating wanted them. Roady did not happen to be in the cast for Scenes 33, 37, 39 and 44, the ones scheduled to be run off that afternoon, so he stayed with Collins and helped him get ready an indoor set for next day.

It was perhaps an hour and a half later that a Lunar rider in a Mexican get-up galloped wildly to the studio and ran excidedly inside.

"Telephone for a doctor, Collins—quick!" he shouted. "Horstman's been shot."

"Shot?"

"Yep—accident—in the execution scene. One o' them blank cartridges must 'a' carried a bullet. He keeled over dead—just turned over once—right spang thru the heart. Keating sent me for a doctor. They're bringing in the body."

Collins stared at the messenger in horror. The Scotch burr in his voice became pronounced, as it always did when he was excited. "Man, man! Do you know what you're saying? I loaded those guns myself—and I'll take my Bible oath every one of them carried a blank cartridge."

"I'm telling you what happened, Neil. That's all."

The property man turned abruptly to the telephone. Roady's hand moved back and forth slowly across his rough chin. The skim-milk eyes of the bow-legged puncher reflected a vague, puzzled amazement.

"Well, I'll be doggoned! Looks kinder coincidal, as you might say, happening right now."

The man in the Chihuahua hat looked at Roady and looked away. "I ain't offering any opinions, Mac."

"Me neither. Right spang thru the heart, you say?"

"Yep—never spoke another word."

"Say, this'll make the boys in the firing squad feel mighty bad. Le's see. There was you and Buck and Jim Henderson——"

"And Jerry Winant and Juan. Five of us."

McCarty scratched his stiff brindle hair. "Darn an unloaded gun, anyhow. That kind's sure hard on the U. S. census returns."

III.

Keating was in the scene dock with Neil Collins when Roady entered and stood awkwardly waiting till he was at leisure.

"How about me getting a week off, Mr. Keating?" the puncher asked presently.

The director considered. "Guess we can arrange it. We've got no big riding stunts to pull off just now."

"Much obliged. I just thought I'd travel around a little, as the old sayin' is."

The eyes of the property man followed Roady a little anxiously to the door. In course of time most people came to like this simple, friendly range rider.

"You don't think he's going off to get on a jag, do you?" asked Collins.

"Nothing like that," decided Keating, promptly. "I've had riders that way—quite a number from first to last, who could lap up the booze like blue blotters. They don't amount to a patch of alkali in an alfalfa field. But Mac is different. No, when his week is up Roady will be back on the job, clear-eyed and steady, with his grin still working."

The director was right. Seven days later McCarty and his suitcase and his grin descended from the westbound train and reported for duty.

The young women of the company guyed him with the touch of affection Roady always won from those who knew him.

"Been back to Washington, Roady? Was the President glad to see you?" asked Miss Trefoyle, the leading woman.

McCarty blushed over the full area of his freckled face and neck. "Me, I just been browsing around some, as the old sayin' is."

"I bet he's been getting married. See his store clothes and high collar," suggested little Kittie Collins.

The embarrassed puncher turned reproachful eyes on the smiling actress. "Now, don't you, ma'am. I wouldn't go for to do anything like that."

"Since the motion picture magazines have taken Roady up he's got so vain," purred Miss Trefoyle. "Maybe he's been to Los Angeles to arrange to be starred in big feature productions."

Catching sight of Keating in the offing, Roady rolled away hastily toward him.

The director shook hands with his star rider. "Glad to see you, Roady. What do you know?"

"I know who killed Horstman," answered McCarty, casually.

The eyes of Keating had been wandering in the direction of Miss Trefoyle, whom he wanted to see about the costuming for a new four reeler. But this statement brought them back sharply.

"So do I, but I can't prove it. That Mexican kid and Winant did it. I'd bet on that, but I've got no evidence. Have you?"

"I'll tell you tonight. First off, I want to satisfy myself on one point. Say, send Juan out with me to round up the remuda this evening?"

"Look out he don't knife you in the back while you ain't looking. He'd do it for a 'dobe dollar if he thought you was on his trail."

Roady continued as if he had not heard. "And about half an hour later send Jerry out to meet us. After I come back I'll tell you all I know."

"Well," agreed Keating, with some reluctance. "But you be careful what you say to those fellows alone out there on the desert. They're liable to shoot at the drop of the hat. Hadn't I better send Buck along, too?"

The rider shook his head. "I'm all right. No need to worry a-tall."

IV.

All day scarves of heat had trembled across the desert upon the wings of the opalescent mirage, but now the air was cool and crystalline as the waters of a mountain brook. The sun had sunk in a splash of glory behind the purple hills, and slowly the radiance had faded till the canyons were a background of violet haze to a stage set with lowered lights.

Roady and Juan Ortiga rode in silence. They had gathered the grazing horses and were driving them toward the lights of Los Robles. The American put a hand on the rein of his companion's horse and drew the animal to a halt beside his own.

"I just got back from Tombstone today. Ever been there, Juan?" he asked quietly.

The dark eyes of the Mexican flashed a startled look at him. The slim body of the young rider was rigid. "No, senor."

"You wonder what I was doing there. Well, it was like this. I——"

"But no, Senor McCarty, I do not wonder. It iss not my business. I am—what you call—indifferent."

Yet Roady noted that the low voice coming to him out of the darkness trembled.

"That so? Well, I'll tell you, anyhow. I went to look up the record of our friend Horstman. I once heard him say he lived there before he joined the Lunar people. And I found his tracks there—plenty of them, tho some were pretty well covered up. He was some devil in his own home town, too, if you ask me."

The new puncher was not sure, but it seemed to him that a little strangling sob lifted from the throat of Juan into the still night.

"Seems he was one of these here love pirates," McCarty continued. "I'd kind of guessed it, tho he hadn't got to going good here yet. For instance, here's one true story. There was a little Mexican girl in Tombstone called Dolores Lopez. What did you say?"

"Nothing, senor—nothing at all!" cried Juan, in a small, tense voice.

"The cur promised to marry her. She was a right sweet little trick, the way the neighbors down there tell it—good Mexican family, y'understand, but all her folks dead except a younger sister called Carmencita. They did fancy work for the curio stores. Well, you can guess what happened. Then when the baby came Horstman laughed at her when she asked him to come thru and marry her. He got into some trouble with another woman about this time and lit out from town. Dolores crept out one night and drowned herself and the baby in a reservoir. That's all right, Juan. You got a license to cry. I 'most did myself when the neighbors told me about it."

"I—I'm not crying," protested Juan, choking over the words.

"That ain't all the story. Another man loved Dolores. She was engaged to him and would have married him if Horstman hadn't butted in and fascinated her with his wild dare-devil ways. Guess who the other man was."

"Some Mexican, maybe," faltered Juan.

"No—an American. Jerry Winant—that's who."

"Jerry!" The word fell faint from a parched throat.

Roady nodded, and went on confidentially. "I dunno sic' 'em about a lot of things, but I can guess how Jerry felt. It made him plumb wild to think of his little girl's life broke by a villain like Horstman. When he found Pete was working for the Lunar outfit, Jerry gets a job here, too. Me, if I'd been in Horstman's shoes I'd 'a' lit out. Yes, sir, I sure would have hit the grit muy pronto. But Pete stays like a bonehead and tries to throw a scare into Jerry. You'd think any man that had flung a leg over the cantle of a saddle would know better than that. Pete didn't, tho."

Young Ortiga broke in abruptly. "You think Jerry—killed Horstman?"

"Me, I ain't sayin' what I think," answered the American. "I'm pointin' out some facts. Mebbe Jerry began to weaken on the job till Horstman gave him that whaling. Mebbe that made him see red again."

"Fairy tales, senor—all fairy tales."

"Is it a fairy tale that I found Jerry hanging about the studio when Keating sent me to fix the sombreros? Why wasn't he eating his lunch with the other boys?"

"Why, then?"

Roady leaned forward in the saddle and looked directly at Juan. "Because he was there firing the rifle that did the killing."

"No, senor—no!" cried Ortiga, terror in his eyes. "It was an accident! Senor Collins put the wrong shell in by mistake."

"Was it an accident that Jerry went down to a tinshop the day before and got a bunch of keys? Was it an accident that when he took the keys back he had the dealer make him a duplicate of one that fitted the lock of the property-room?"

Juan slid from the saddle and came close to McCarty, lifting to the pale moonlight a face from which the blood had been driven.

"No. Jerry had nothing to do with it—nothing! I got the keys. The man will swear to it. I fixed the rifle. I shot the Gringo devil! May a thousand curses rest on his soul."

Out of the darkness a voice called. "That you, Roady?"

Presently Winant rode up and joined them. His gaze passed from one to the other. The hard eyes in the set face he turned upon McCarty showed that he had sensed a crisis.

"You dropped in on good time, Jerry," said Roady, quietly. "The kid here has just confessed that he killed Horstman."

"It's a lie!" burst from the tight lips of Winant.

"Hold your horses, Jerry, and listen to me." Roady ran briefly over the evidence he had gathered. "You did it or he did it. That's a cinch. Come clean. Which one of you was it?"

"You haven't got a thing against the kid—not a thing. This that you claim is evidence against me doesn't reach him at all."

"That so, Jerry? Why did you whistle 'Tipperary' that day when you saw me coming? You didn't feel a darned bit like whistling. You were sore clear thru, if ever a man was. But you whistled when you first saw me and you whistled again when I passed into the studio. Why?"

"Why, then—since you know so much that ain't so?" demanded Winant sourly.

"To warn the kid that I was coming—that's why. Juan was inside fixing the guns while you kept watch. He got behind a pile of canvas scenes and hid. What's more, he had one of the rifles with him right then. I didn't pay much attention at the time, but you know how a feller kind of sees things without noticing. A gun was missing from the rack. Fact."

"Some fellows see a heap that ain't there," retorted Winant, with bitter sarcasm. "Why, you buzzard-head, what call had Juan to mix in on the deal? Say just for argument you're right about me hating Horstman. Was it any of Juan's funeral?"

"In regards to that I reckon it was," replied Roady, very gently and deliberately. "You see Juan happens to be the little sister of the girl who killed herself on account of Horstman's villainy. Juan is Carmencita Lopez."

Juan turned to Winant with a mirthless laugh that covered a sob. "It's no use. He knows everything, Jerry. He knows I loaded the guns, that I killed the devil who murdered Dolores. He knows I'm a girl—and that I love you." She whirled upon Roady with a splendid savage defiance. "I did it—not Jerry. And I'm glad of it. I'd do it again. Send me to prison if you want to. I don't care."

Swinging to the ground, Jerry put an arm across her shoulders awkwardly. "That's all tommyrot, Roady. She's only a kid—not of age yet—just a little kid doing what I told her—and it was my bullet got Horstman—not hers. I'm responsible. I'll take my medicine, whatever it is."

The eyes of Carmencita were like stars. "No, senor, no! I did it—I alone. What are you going to do about it? How will you punish me?"

"Just a moment till I get things clear. Have I got it right that you—kinder like Jerry?"

"I love him with my whole heart, senor. I do not care who knows. He has been good to me—so good."

"And you, Jerry—you don't exactly hate this young criminal?"

The face of Winant went brick red with embarrassment. "You see, Roady, we both thought a heck of Dolores—and we suffered together—and hated together—so I reckon it was natural that we got to—thinking a whole lot of each other."

"You'd marry her if you got a chance?"

Jerry stroked softly the dusky head buried in his shoulder. He merely nodded to the other man.

The eyes of Roady traveled over the two horses the others had been riding. When he spoke it was quite casually. "Them two broncha must have cost the Lunar Company about a hundred bucks. They're good travelers. I expect they could fling a lot of dust behind them in a night." With more apparent irrelevance still he added: "Brady and me

(Continued on Page 29.)

"THE SONG OF '18".

The song of '18 is a marching song,
Of throbbing drums, of tramping feet,
Of bugles which never shall sound retreat,
Of hope, of faith, of purpose strong,
Of high resolve and the will to win
The glorious struggle we all are in—
Forward, forward with heart and soul!
Onward, onward to gain the goal!

Some must fight in the fields of war,
Some must toil in the fields of peace,
Shop and mill must their stores increase,
But all must follow one guiding star.
And whether it's here or in bleeding France,
Hurrah! Hurrah for the thrilling chance!
Catch the spirit and swing along—
The song of '18 is a marching song!

—LEE SHIPPEY.

Miss Sherlock Takes a Hand

Being the Story of a Girl Detective's Clever Work

By T. C. Harbaugh

Something Shone in the Early Dawn and Captain Jose Was Looking Into the Barrel of an Automatic.

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CHAPTER I.

DIAMOND CUT DIAMOND.

FOR once there was genuine excitement at Number 606 Paradise avenue. The ornate library looked like a shambles. Seemingly not a single piece of furniture had been left unturned. Papers were scattered over the floor as if they had been swept from the table by one effort; the armchair, which was the owner's favorite, lay on its back, with one arm gone, and there was a trail of ink across the rich carpet, showing how the inkstand had rolled to the corner where it still lay.

In the midst of this ruin lay Hiram Henderson.

Everybody knew him. A man of great wealth, a gentleman of the old school, but, for all that, a money-grabber who had more good traits than some of his fellow beings.

The butler had found him dead on the floor and had raised the alarm which had brought the police in hot haste to the premises, as if they expected to find the doer of the evil deed awaiting arrest. Lot Connors, chief of the detective department, a shrewd mystery solver, was the first to stand officially where the dark blow had fallen in the night. Several of his subordinates had accompanied him and only waited for him to set them on the trail. The police surgeon had also put in an appearance, just as tho a man who had been pierced thru the heart by a bit of steel would need his services!

Connors had an eye for everything. It ran around the room, taking in the minutest object. It was evident that for once the detective chief was perplexed.

"He fought for his life," said the surgeon, as he arose after examining the rigid object on the carpet.

Connors nodded.

"It was a desperate struggle, too," he commented and then his big jaws closed and he said no more.

Several of the servants who had stared in from the hallway made a move to get away and then the chief seemed to wake up.

"Come in here," said he, and the whole lot came forward.

He fired questions at them like ammunition from a gatling gun. He elicited from the white-faced group the fact that all had been absent the preceding night, dancing at a second-class ball. Not one had returned until the wee sma' hours and none had thought of looking into the library.

At length the surgeon attempted to rid himself of an opinion which had obsessed him for some time.

"The villain's motive——" he began, when Connors' jaws unsnapped.

"Simply a case of blood lust," said he.

The little surgeon instantly retreated into his shell.

At that moment all heard some one on the stair which ascended to the upper part of the house from the broad hall, and a trim little woman of perhaps five-and-twenty, neatly dressed and plain of features, entered the room.

Connors' gaze centered upon her in a moment. His first query went as straight to her as an arrow to its target.

"Who sent for you?"

"No one, sir," was the reply.

"When did you come?"

"I arrived a short time before you entered the house, Mr. Connors."

"Then you heard——"

"Yes, sir, I heard," interrupted the woman.

"You are Miss Hurst of Orange street?"

"Miss Hurst of Penway lane, if you will accept the correction."

"You've moved, then?"

"Yes, sir."

"This is a case for the department," continued Connors, swallowing his chagrin at the woman's curtness. "You will keep hands off, Miss Hurst."

There was no answer.

Miss Hilda Hurst was turning away when Connors' voice was heard again.

"Miss Hurst?"

She whirled quickly, but did not speak.

"Why don't you say: 'What is it?' "

"I don't have to."

A smile went around the group of spectators.

"Are you going to intrude your personality into this matter?" shot the detective chief.

She straightened the full length of her five feet three.

"I am a free lance, Mr. Connors," she said, looking the chief fairly in the eye. "I do not belong to your department and, therefore, am not under your orders."

"I know you're not, but I'll lay down a little law to you."

"I am amenable to no law as interpreted by you."

The big chief seemed to swell almost to the point of bursting.

"Then get out!" he roared.

Hilda Hurst merely pursed her lips and went to the open door.

On the cold stone steps in front of the mansion she nearly collided with a man whose face was almost hidden by a great collar, for the air was biting and there was a little snow on the ground.

"Hilda!" said the man, who was not much taller than the woman sleuth, and Hilda stopped at once.

"I didn't expect to see you here, Max," said she. "It's bad business."

"So I hear. Murder, isn't it?"

"Plain murder," was the reply.

"Any clews?"

"Come along, Max," returned Hilda, plucking the man's sleeve. "You look cold."

"In this new hand-me-down?" grinned the half-concealed face. "Sixteen dollars at Linberger's forced sale."

"I don't care where you got it," smiled Hilda. "Aren't you coming along?"

Max Piper trotted at her side and they went down the street together.

"Max," said she, "do you remember the odd-looking pearl you tried to purchase at Asuncion last year?"

"The one that you said resembled a turtle's head?"

The little woman nodded.

"I hadn't thought of it since, but you recall the incident."

"I wonder who bought the pearl?"

"Ask me something easy," returned Piper.

"Of course I didn't think you knew, but I was just wondering to whom that native sold his find."

"Better go and ask him."

"Maybe I will," and with this conversation lagged and they walked several squares in silence.

Suddenly Piper looked at his companion and said:

"You didn't come away from the house in very good humor. You must have run afoul of Connors."

"I did collide with that grampus," smiled Hilda Hurst. "He is welcome to all he got out of me."

"I don't doubt that, Hilda."

"I'll see you later, Max," she said presently. "I live now in Penway lane—218, second floor."

Piper made a mental note of the new address.

"Are you really going to look into the Henderson tragedy?" he ventured.

"Perhaps."

"Not with Lot Connors' consent, I'm thinking?"

"Certainly not, Max."

"Well, I wish you success, but is it a very deep mystery?"

"Deeper than a well," was the answer.

They separated at a corner and Piper watched the woman out of sight from the depths of his great collar.

"She's a caution," he commented. "There's no better mystery solver in the whole town than that girl. Connors doesn't like her because she's robbed him of some of his laurels. She beat him to a frazzle in the big diamond robbery case. And she's got nerve, too. She cowed Red Dan and his whole gang with the little automatic she carries in her pocket. I wish I had half her acumen, but if I had I'd still lack her nerve."

He sauntered off and disappeared.

The next day Mr. Max Piper found a letter in his mail.

"Dollars to doughnuts," he said, "that it's from Hilda Hurst. I know her handwriting," and with this he opened the envelope and drew forth a bit of pea-green paper.

"Dear Max," he read breathlessly, "I shall be out of the city indefinitely. I am going to Asuncion," and there the letter stopped as suddenly as it had begun.

Piper looked up, an amused expression on his round little face.

"Going down to find who bought the turtle pearl, I'll bet my head!" he exclaimed. "I wonder if it has anything to do with the Henderson tragedy?"

Then he thought that he would like to see Hilda before she got away and bent his steps toward Penway lane.

Mounting the steps of the modest house to which the little clew finder had directed him, he knocked and waited. The door opened and the landlady confronted him with an interrogation in her eyes.

"Miss Hurst——" began Max, when he was interrupted.

"Miss Hurst has left the city; her destination is unknown," said the woman and Piper turned away.

"She's going to a deuced bad place," he said under his breath. "They kill people down there, but I believe Hilda Hurst can take care of herself," and pulling up his ample collar, he braved the cold once more.

CHAPTER II.

THE WOMAN IN THE HAMMOCK.

LAZILY swinging in a hammock in a grove of stately palms lay a young woman. Her surroundings were tropical and a balmy air laden with the scents of the South Seas lightly touched her cheeks. Around her was the sleepy town of Asuncion, and almost underneath her hammock slipped a little path over which all sorts of people were constantly treading.

To the sapphire west lay the island of Cubaqua and in the east stretched the famous Pearl Coast, trending to the Dragon's Mouth, the haunt of the old buccaneers. Had she gazed southward she might have made out the rim of the rugged Venezuelan shore, while northward were the golden waters of the almost limitless Caribbean.

This woman had seen something of and read much about her environment.

She knew that many years ago those waters were swept by Drake and Hawkins, who came out from England to plunder the great treasure ships of Spain, which plowed the deep, filled with treasures brought from Peru, thence across the Isthmus to Nombre de Dios, to be transferred again to the vessels.

She seemed asleep, did the woman in the hammock, one arm hung over its side displaying the fair pinkish flesh to the elbow, whilst the other was hidden among the soft netting. But she was not asleep. When on a trail Hilda

Hurst, Mystery Solver, seldom courted slumber.

Men in splendid Spanish garb passed her, but she gave them little heed; beautiful women flitted by with talk and laughter, but Hilda turned away from them. Half-naked natives, pearl divers, slouched along, each with his little pearl sack and knife, the latter for the man-eating sharks that inhabit the treasure beds.

It was these men whom Hilda was watching. Not one passed without being inspected, and yet they all looked alike—lean, agile men, with dark faces and bodies, thru the skin of which showed their complement of ribs.

"I believe I shall know him," said Hilda to herself, with a smile. "Max used to say that a photograph of one would do for the whole lot. I half believe it. All seem to have been cast in the same mold. Here they live and here they die, the most of them in the jaws of the sharks—a fitting doom for their calling."

At length she started and leaned over the edge of the hammock. Her eyes were centered upon a native who had come forward. He was a man of uncertain age, for no one knows how many years a pearl diver has lived.

The native sauntered along as tho in no haste to reach the pearl waters. He swung along lazily, his eyes on the ground and his long arms dangling listlessly at his sides.

"Here is my man, at last!" cried the woman. "The same rings in his ears and the scar on his chin. It is Abozo, the diver, the man who had the turtle-headed pearl."

She leaned farther over the fringe of her nest and said something in a low tone. She had called the man by the name she had just spoken.

The gaunt fellow stopped and looked around. At first he did not see the hammock and its occupant, but at last his gaze alighted upon them. The muscles of his face slightly twitched.

"Abozo!" Hilda repeated.

The man looked again and then came forward. He was standing by the hammock now, his dark face an enigma and his little foxlike eyes, which could see a shark in troubled waters, fixed upon her.

"Senorita!" he muttered.

Hilda held out her hand, which the pearl diver took gingerly and released promptly.

"You still hunt pearls?" continued Miss Hurst.

"Si, senorita."

"And you are the best hunter of the sea in all the world!"

If Hilda thought her flattery pleased the native, she was deceived, for he exhibited no signs of pleasure. She spoke Spanish so well that the man must have thought her a resident of the island city.

"I am coming down some time to see you find pearls," she went on. "But you must look out for the sharks."

Abozo grinned for the first time and laid his hand lightly on the hilt of his shark knife.

"I haven't forgotten the strange-looking pearl you found last summer, Abozo. It has lingered in my mind ever since."

"Abozo finds many queer things in the bay."

"Yes, yes, I know you do. But that one pearl has few duplicates, I'm sure."

A look of inquiry deepened in the dark eyes.

"It was like the head of a sea turtle," proceeded the Mystery Solver. "Do you find many like it, Abozo?"

"Only the one, senorita."

"I thought so. What became of it?"

The man seemed to become as mute as a wall.

Hilda dived into a little purse which rested beside her and drew forth several silver coins. Holding them in the palm of her hand, she looked again at the pearl diver.

"Who bought the turtle pearl, good Abozo?"

The little eyes were staring at the bright coins and the man's bosom seemed to heave with ill-suppressed avarice.

"Abozo forgets," he said.

Hilda knew that the man was lying. She knew that the natives of Margarita never forget. They photograph on the film of the brain, as it were, every strange face and years fail to efface it.

"Come!" cried the woman, clinking the coins in her hand. "I would like to buy the turtle pearl."

"Abozo is sure, senorita, that the man will not sell it."

"Men sell everything nowadays, even their honor," answered the woman. "They've been doing this since the days of Judas."

Abozo crossed himself.

"You will not tell me? Not even for this?" and the coins were thrust almost into the man's face.

The pearl diver shrugged his naked shoulders and looked toward the glimmering bay. The money was a great temptation and he was battling with it. Hilda never for a moment took her eyes from him.

"Pearl gone away off," the native presently murmured.

"Yes, I believe that," Hilda said.

Then the pearl diver became voluble, such is the purchasing power of money.

"The white man gave Abozo a good price for the turtle head. It was an evil pearl and Abozo did not want to keep it."

"No?"

"White buyer not here now."

"Was he Spanish, Abozo?"

The pearl diver shook his head.

"English, then?"

"No, American."

Hilda held her thoughts in leash.

"He is not here now? He is gone, you say? Was he a rich American?"

"All Americans are rich."

"But this particular one, Abozo?"

"He lived over there," answered the man, pointing toward the hotel at the edge of the palm grove. "He was here last summer."

"What was he like?"

"He was a big American with much money. He watched the pearl waters a good deal, senorita."

"Buying many pearls?"

"He bought but one, the turtle's head."

"Oh!"

Hilda's hand was now poised over the dark palm before her.

"You do not know his name, Abozo?" she asked, in low tones.

The native shook his head again.

"Mebbe the tall senor in white at the hotel does," he said.

"That will do," smiled the Mystery Solver. "I am coming down to see you find the pearls."

The lean fellow slouched away, clutching the coins and watched by the tenant of the hammock until he was out of sight.

A little smile of triumph gathered at Hilda's lips.

"The big man in white?" she murmured, as the smile broadened. "It is Captain Jose of the Imperiale."

Then at last her eyelids closed and she appeared to sleep. Diver after diver passed near her hammock, but she paid no attention to them. She seemed to have found her man.

The sun was drooping westward to gild the waves of the land-locked bay ere she stirred. A cooler wind had come in from the sea and with it new fragrance. She opened her eyes and looked around. The grove seemed deserted.

At length she flung herself from the hammock and stretched herself like an animal that awakens after a long slumber.

Strolling thru the avenues of palms, she emerged in front of the hotel, a building with the inevitable porch. A few men were idling near by, with the inseparable Spanish cigarette between their lips, showing off to the pretty senoritas who had come out for the purpose of catching a smile or two from the rich foreigners, pleasure seekers who come every year to Margarita.

"I'll tap Senor Jose," said she, under her breath. "If he is a storehouse of information I'll ransack it before I go to bed." And with this she mounted the three steps that led to the veranda.

A big man in spotless white was smoking in a wicker chair behind a lot of vines.

"Aha, my prey!" cried Hilda, and the next moment she was at Captain Jose's side.

CHAPTER III.

HILDA PUMPS THE SPHINX.

HILDA HURST had been several weeks from the city, and not a word had reached her from that quarter. What had become of the Henderson enigma she did not know. What had Lot Connors and his subordinates discovered? Had they found a clew that would lead them to the solution of the mystery of Paradise avenue? Hilda could imagine the big detective chief pleased with the idea that he had put her aside and shut her off from taking his laurels. Connors was to some extent a bulldozer, whose bluff often worked to his advantage. He brooked no outside interference and, knowing what she had accomplished in other perplexing cases, he would keep her at arms' length and, when he had won by his peculiar means, laugh at her discomfiture.

She thought of these things when she approached Captain Jose on the spacious veranda of the Hotel Imperiale, of which he was sole proprietor.

He was a hulk of a man, half Spaniard, half Carib, with a big face and iron jaws indicating resolution, and from what she had already seen of him, as difficult to pick as a time lock.

The situation, however, did not daunt her. She had not come out to be baffled by such as he. His repulsion—for she fancied he would repulse her, even tho she was his guest and occupied one of the best rooms in his hotel—should not weigh against her intentions.

The man looked at her as she came up and his countenance did not relax. He removed his cigarette and poised it before his face. Like a human Sphinx he looked Hilda over from head to foot with his deep-set eyes, but did not speak. There was an unoccupied chair at his right and the young woman drew it forward and deposited herself therein. Captain Jose hardly noticed the movement.

"I'm glad to be back here," began the Mystery Solver, breaking the ice. "One is always glad to come back to Margarita."

"Si."

"I think I would like to make my home here. I like the sea and the air."

The big head slightly inclined.

"I like to watch the pearl divers, too," pursued Hilda, impinging upon the subject nearest her heart. "They are wonderful fellows, don't you think, senor?"

"Pigs!" growled Captain Jose.

"I like them just the same," the young woman went on, with determination not to be cut off. "They find such wonderful pearls sometimes."

"Trash!" grunted the Sphinx.

"You have many Americans here. I am an American. Some of my people come down here often. I remember when I was here last summer—you remember, senor?—you had a gentleman guest who was interested in pearls."

"Americans who have money like pearls."

"That is true. My friend of whom I speak was a real lover of the sea treasures. He bought liberally."

"And got robbed by the rascally divers, no doubt."

"He didn't think so."

"But robbed all the same. I had some nice guests last summer."

"So you had. I remember them," and Hilda smiled.

"I cannot pick out your friend from the rest, senorita."

"No. Why, the big man, the man with the good looks," and Hilda knew she was making a venture which might turn out to be valueless.

"Oh!" laughed Captain Jose. "Senor Crucible."

The woman did not betray her interest at mention of the name.

"Yes," said she, "Senor Crucible."

"Rich, but a fool," laughed the man again. "He doesn't come back any more."

"Maybe he thought he had bought enough pearls when he got the turtle-headed one."

The eyes which had been turned from the clever woman shifted back to her.

"He didn't buy the turtle pearl," said Captain Jose.

"No?" and Hilda watched the impassive face before asking, "You remember it?"

"Si. Abozo, the pearl thief, found it."

"And sold it?"

Captain Jose suddenly remembered that he had an errand within the hotel and pushed back his chair.

"Pardon, senorita," said he, with a hasty glance at Hilda. "You will like the breeze, I am sure. The sea brings the insects into the palmery, but not many of them get here."

He was moving off, with the keen eyes of the woman sleuth riveted upon him; she seemed on the point of breaking into a laugh. She had read men before; she had read all sorts of men and she knew that the proprietor of the Hotel Imperiale was lying.

For some minutes she rocked back and forth on the veranda, apparently listening to the sounds of tropical life wafted to her ears. The man had disappeared.

Presently there came into view down the veranda a figure that had a catlike movement. It crept forward till it reached a clump of plants whose velvety fronds offered an ambuscade and there it halted. But Hilda had seen.

"Lola," she said to herself.

Captain Jose's wife was a beauty as voluptuous as the far-famed Serpent of the Nile, with a grace of movement which added to her charms. She was regal in stature, supple as the jaguars of the mainland, with hands bedizened with rings and a mouth whose lines betokened firmness, if not danger. It was this woman who stood in the shadow of the palms, and Hilda knew that she was being studied by the keenest eyes in Asuncion.

The cat was watching the mouse. Not a sound came from the palms; they waved gently in the night wind and, deftly parting now and then, showed Hilda the figure among them.

Above all things she hated to be spied on. There was an independent quality to her nature which brooked no espionage, and to be watched by one of her own sex was irritating. She thought at first of letting Lola know that she was seen, but quickly put the idea aside. Let the feline watch, she thought.

After a short stay in the chair Hilda arose, and, walking to the end of the veranda, looked out over the coast. She knew that the last pearl diver had sought his hut and that there was nothing in the bay but some shipping. Somewhere Captain Jose was laughing over the manner in which he had baffled her investigation. Why? What bond of fellowship linked him to the man who had bought the turtle pearl? And why had he declared that Crucible, the American, was not the purchaser?

Hilda Hurst stood for ten minutes at the end of the veranda. When she turned away it was to step from it and walk down the poorly lighted street which led past the hotel.

Suddenly she turned aside from the thoroughfare and rambled into the quarter occupied by the divers. There were few lights there. The huts were mere wattles, the naked children who ran about almost tripped her, for they were hard to see.

Suddenly she came upon a crowd of excited people who were gathered round an object that lay on the ground. The air was full of parrotlike, tho human, chatter, which seemed to increase in volume as Hilda neared the spot.

The natives made way for her.

"Abozo," said a giant, as she leaned forward to get a look at the thing upon which she had almost stepped.

The tropic stars shed their light upon it and Hilda recoiled, but kept her head.

"Struck from behind," said some one. "He has been robbed of his day's find."

The American woman stooped over the corpse and found the pearl sack, which lay beside it. She ran her hand into its depths and brought out half a dozen pearls, which she held up to the gaping crowd.

"He was not robbed," said she, returning look for look. "Abozo was not killed for his pearls." And then she said to herself, "He was killed because he talked to me."

Five minutes later Hilda stood in her own little room. If she could she would have sent a message to Max Piper, at that moment discussing a grill in his favorite hashery.

The night had grown still. She fancied that Captain Jose had returned to the veranda and that Lola had reported to her lord. Up from the bay came the shriek of a steamer's whistle. It died away without the semblance of an echo.

Hilda turned to the little table in the middle of the room and sat down. She took from a secret receptacle on her person a small chamois bag which she placed before her. Opening it, she drew out something wrapped in tissue paper. Her eyes suddenly lifted and roved around the apartment.

In another moment she had unrolled the tissue paper and taken therefrom a pearl which was strangely shaped like a turtle's head. As she rolled it back and forth in her palm her face lit up with a smile.

"It's pretty, for all its shape," she mused. "What would Lot Connors say if he knew I found it where the Henderson enigma begins? The man who lost this pearl in the house that night killed Hiram Henderson. It is as certain as that two and two make four. When I find that man I solve the mystery and put another one over on you, Lot Connors."

She laughed at the end of her speech, but the next second she was on her feet and, with a revolver in her hand, was bending forward with her eyes on the door. Some one was out there, and tho her gaze could not pierce the wood, she felt that the spy was the Rose of Margarita, the wife of Captain Jose.

CHAPTER IV.

OUT OF THE COILS.

THE one sound which had reached the ears of the Mystery Solver was not repeated. Slight as it was, she knew that but half an inch of planks separated her from a human being, and for some time she stood leaning forward, with the little silver-mounted automatic in her hand.

The door was locked. But for all that it could be forced without much effort. Why not open it and come face to face with the one beyond, telling that person that there were those who were not afraid to face the spy or assassin?

The turtle-head pearl she had hastily concealed in her pocket and it was safe there. It was not to be seen by any one whom she feared or suspected. She had brought it with her to the tropics seeking the owner, for had she not picked it up in Hiram Henderson's abode while he lay amid the debris in his library, murdered, to the puzzling of Lot Connors and his sleuth-hunting associates?

She had learned all she could at Asuncion and was ready to set foot on the first outbound vessel. Then she would see Max again and tell him as much of her trip as she deemed advisable. Piper was a good fellow, but of no assistance when it came to solving human enigmas dark with crime. He could discuss a good menu and dress as became a gentleman of moderate means. He was a genial companion whom Hilda liked, tho not well enough to exchange her name for that of Piper. Sometime, perhaps, when she had retired from her dangerous and exciting calling—but why speculate? By that time Max would be happily mated and Mrs. Max would be proud of her husband.

To Hilda's relief footsteps at last receded from the door and she breathed freely once more.

She went back to the table, put the pearl away and then took a book from her satchel. She was not to sleep that night. In her mind lingered no doubts of the cause of Abozo's death. The pearl diver had been seen talking to her in the palm grove and that had been enough for some one. The hand which had killed evidently had not robbed the native of a single pearl. There was something afoot in the tropics as dark as this murder.

The birds were singing in the trees beyond the hotel when Hilda laid down the book. Not for a moment had her eyes closed. She looked out of the window and saw the shimmer of dawn on the sleeping bay. A large ship rode

at anchor and her heart fluttered when she saw the Stars and Stripes at its peak.

She had reached Asuncion at a time when tourists were not plenty; the season for their coming had not fairly opened. Her meals had been taken almost alone.

Pablo, the dark-faced waiter, looked at Hilda as she entered the dining-room, and took his place behind her chair. The boy had an open countenance for a native and she thought that in some things he might be trusted.

She had come to the tropics with such a small allowance of luggage that transportation was not difficult.

"Pablo," she said, looking up in the face of the statuesque youth, "when does the American ship sail?"

The young native started.

"Don't you know, Pablo?"

"Tomorrow, senorita."

"Why didn't you answer at first?"

"Captain Jose doesn't want me to tell at all."

"Oh!" ejaculated Hilda, with a little flash. "So Captain Jose is in the game?"

The boy did not reply.

"It's a straight street to the wharf, I believe?" the Mystery Solver said.

"No turns, senorita."

Hilda finished her breakfast, returned to her room and, counting up her bill, laid the exact amount on the table. Then she looked once more at her scant luggage to see that nothing had been omitted, and finally sat down for a little rest.

She knew she would not have to leave the hotel by the main entrance, for there was another which would let her into the open at the end of it, and before she was missed she would be well on her way to the steamer.

Suddenly her roving gaze fell upon something that hung over the edge of the couch which she had not occupied. She got up and crossed the room; the thing vanished. Putting out one hand, she took hold of the pillow and threw it upon the floor.

"Ah!"

Coiled on the white sheet was a little reptile with yellow eyes; it was not more than ten inches long. It was pretty despite its venomous qualities, tho Hilda knew that to be "kissed" by that little thing was swift destruction. A shudder for an instant took possession of her whole being. If she had pressed the couch there would be no one to trail the maker of the Henderson enigma but Lot Connors.

Hilda retreated a pace and looked around for a weapon. The reptile did not stir. It seemed to laugh in her face, a beautiful death with two eyes of wonderful power.

At length the little woman pulled the oilcloth from the table and rolled it into a weapon. She dealt three swift blows upon the yellow coils and saw them straighten out and measure the snake's full length on the floor.

"I'll take it home for Max," she laughed as she lifted the dead thing. "It will make him a beautiful necktie." Then she poked it into her valise, which she locked securely.

Once in the open she looked back at the Hotel Imperiale. It had not awakened. At least its few guests were not astir and there were few people in the palm grove. Hilda quickened her steps as she turned her face toward the bay. Aboard the American ship she would be safe, and on the morrow her face would be turned toward her own land and there she would play out the game which she had entered.

Suddenly she felt a thrill which she could not suppress. Cool as she always was, the man who stepped into the road before her sent her blood like a lava current thru every vein.

"Which way, senorita?"

He looked more a giant than ever, did Captain Jose, in the fresh dawn. Garbed in the spotless white which he wore at all times, he presented a picture which on other occasions might have been worth inspecting.

The little Mystery Solver soon got back her sang-froid.

"I am going home, Captain Jose," said she, in a pleasant tone which had deceived more than one evil-doer.

"But we cannot lose the senorita."

"You must lose me," pursued Hilda. "You will find your money on my table——"

Captain Jose lifted his hands in a gesture of remonstrance.

"But some Americans are coming soon," said he "and then the senorita will find congenial company."

"But I cannot stay, Captain Jose," was the answer. "I shall depart in the ship which sails tomorrow."

She made a move to advance, but the big fellow seemed to plant himself the more firmly in her path. He was accompanied by a dog with bloodhound build, and the animal eyed Hilda with no merciful mien.

"If the ship does not sail until tomorrow, why go to it now?" said Captain Jose.

"I will be with my countrymen till the vessel clears," replied Hilda, "and that is something."

Once more she moved a step, but the barrier was not removed.

Suddenly the Mystery Solver shifted her luggage to her left hand and her right made a quick pass to her pocket. Something shone in the early dawn and Captain Jose was looking into the barrel of an automatic.

"I am going to the ship," came over the weapon, in the same calm tones. "You will find your money on my table, Captain Jose. Adios, senor."

She swerved a trifle from the road to give him the most of it and, holding the revolver ready to use, flitted on.

The dog growled and showed his teeth. Captain Jose stared at her with eyes that would have killed had they been arrows, but the menace of the automatic cowed his blood and he stood still. Ten feet away Hilda turned and faced him.

"Captain Jose, you will accept the thanks of your guest for your entertainment," said she. "I will never forget it and there are other things connected with my coming to the island that will also remain in my memory. When you return to the hotel, remember me kindly to Senora Lola, who kept me awake last night and by whose orders I was to have the bedfellow which I am now taking back with me. And least but not last, my dear Captain Jose, I thank you for

"I Can Tell You a Great Deal About the Gray Brotherhood, Seeing That I Am One of the Charter Members."

telling me who bought the turtle-headed pearl. Or did you not try to deceive me on that score? Nevertheless, I hope we part friends. And when I come again it will be to remain longer on the island where pearl divers are knifed for talking to American women, and where you, dear Captain, lie like the old freebooters who used to make Margarita their rendezvous."

Captain Jose stood breathless, with glaring eyes riveted upon Hilda, and saw her go down the palm-fringed road with the little weapon clutched in her hand.

All at once, with a cry, he bounded toward the hotel and was lost to view, and a few minutes later Hilda Hurst stood on the broad decks of the American steamer.

"Now for the real trail!" said she, looking back upon the scene of her adventures. "The necktie for Max and the turtle-head pearl for vengeance!"

CHAPTER V.
MR. CRUCIBLE.

THERE were times when Mr. Lot Connors, chief of the Metropolitan Detective Bureau, liked to take his ease. He generally did so at his home in Prospect street, where his sister did the honors of his house, for the big chief had never been enmeshed by Cupid. On these restful occasions he encased his feet in a pair of velvet slippers and, pipe in mouth, looked over the evening newspapers.

"Lucretia," said he to his tall sister, one evening when he had seated himself in his armchair and Miss Lucretia had brought the nicotine companion forward and struck the helpful match, "I may have a visitor tonight."

"One of the force, brother?"

"No, quite a different person. You know I leave business at the office when I lock up. Mr. Crucible is coming."

A little smile appeared at Lucretia's mouth.

"You are getting pretty thick with Mr. Crucible," said she, looking down at the chief.

"He's good company, girl," replied Connors. "None of your flimsy stuff. He's all right and a yard wide. I rather like Crucible. He's seen a good deal of the world and knows how to tell it," and with this Connors dived into the news and his sister slipped noiselessly from the room.

It was not long before the tingling bell announced some one. Connors looked up and listened to the footsteps that came pattering down the hall. In another moment the door opened and a man of 50, well muffled in a heavy overcoat, made his appearance. But little of his face was visible till he shed his outer covering and removed his hat. Then Connors looked into a cleanly shaven face adorned with a pair of deep brown eyes set over prominent cheek bones. There was a touch of silver in the man's hair, and his hands, which were long and thin, were attractive on account of their cleanliness and manicuring.

Connors greeted his visitor pleasantly and pushed forward a chair which was within reach.

"Glad to see you, sir," he said. "It's better sitting here than being out on business. Cold, eh?"

"Yes," replied Mr. Crucible, stretching out his feet and enjoying the warmth, "there's a cold wind coming up the bay."

"And it blows over more than one poor unfortunate floating there, no doubt," said Connors, grimly.

Mr. Crucible looked at the fire and then allowed his eyes to wander around the room.

"They've given you a rest of late, haven't they?" he suddenly asked, as if the thought had just popped into his head.

"Crime has been slack of late, that's a fact," was the reply. "We haven't had a real sensation since the affair on Paradise avenue—the Henderson affair, you know."

Mr. Crucible seemed to prick up his ears.

"But we've got that matter well in hand," continued Connors, with a glow on his cheeks. "It took a little work, but thank Heaven, we're about at the end of the skein."

"Do you ever make mistakes, Mr. Connors?" asked Crucible.

The chief chuckled a little.

"It's a wise sleuth that doesn't," he laughed. "The Henderson case is an example."

"How so?"

The chief refilled his pipe before he answered.

"My first opinion was that it was simply a case of murder lust, that there was no motive; for you see the library was in a state of wreck. It looked as if it had been hit by one of those Western cyclones. I can't recall anything like it. Nothing had been found missing and it looked for all the world like the work of some insane murderer obsessed by a desire to kill, kill, kill."

"But you changed your mind, eh?"

"Yes. We struck a clew most unexpectedly and, tuaning it down, made an arrest of which you probably have heard."

"I have not. I have been out of town for days and returned but yesterday. I haven't seen a metropolitan newspaper in all that time."

"Well, it was this way: Henderson was a man who sometimes preyed on his fellow men. He was unscrupulous in his dealings and managed to get a good deal out of his questionable ventures. He was, tho few knew it, the head of a mining venture which was absolutely rotten. He took delight in fleecing the outside world and did so to the Queen's taste. We found out that an old lady named Payne had put nearly every dollar she possessed into Henderson's scheme and, of course, lost it all. She has a nephew who resolved to make the shark disgorge, but as well might he have tried to get blood out of a frozen turnip.

"This young man made several calls upon Henderson, as we discovered, and always met with a rebuff. His failures rendered him furious and he made no secret of his hatred of the gold-bug. It was with this clew we started. I need not go into details, Mr. Crucible, but, in short, we ascertained that on the night of the murder Stanley Payne visited the Henderson home. What took place there we can imagine, for loud words were heard in the library by one of the servants and at 9 o'clock the young man left the place. At that time Hiram Henderson was alive. Shortly after young Payne's departure the whole entourage went to a bal masque and remained till early in the morning. Upon their return the crime was discovered.

"Here comes in the insane jealousy of woman. The head maid of the Henderson household—which, by the way, consisted of the financier and a young ward, Miss Lotta, who at the time of the murder was visiting in Philadelphia—had a passion for young Payne, who rejected her advances. I don't blame Payne for keeping the girl at arms' length, for a woman who peaches on a man has never commanded an iota of my respect."

"I don't like such creatures myself, chief," commented Mr. Crucible.

"Well, to continue a little further, this girl sends an anonymous letter to the department, asking us to look after Stanley Payne and make him explain all his movements on the night of the 10th. We pay no attention to such communications, as a rule, for my motto is that no person but a slavering coward writes anonymous letters; but I resolved for once to see what was in this one. The result was somewhat startling. To sum the whole thing up in a breath, we soon tightened the coils about young Mr. Payne and he is now in durance charged with murder. He admits that he visited the Henderson house that fatal night and had high words with the financier, and another witness was picked up who declares that the prisoner was seen back in that locality after midnight, but he refuses to discuss this evidence. There's another bit of romance to this case," and here Connors laid his pipe aside. "The fair ward of the dead man, upon her return, sides with young Payne and declares that he is innocent. The will of the dead man, which we discovered secreted in a drawer in the wall of the library, leaves the bulk of his property to a society called the Gray Brotherhood, but up to this time we have failed to locate a single member of that organization."

Up to this moment Mr. Crucible seemed to take no particular interest in Chief Connors' story, but at mention of the Gray Brotherhood he gave a visible start.

"How came you to find the will?" he suddenly asked.

"Miss Lotta found it for us, to be accurate."

"Where is the document?"

"I have it locked up as yet in the office safe."

"I am astounded, Mr. Connors!" exclaimed Crucible. "Is it possible that we have at last found the long-lost member of the Gray Brotherhood?"

The pudgy figure of Lot Connors shot forward in his chair.

"What's that you say, Mr. Crucible?" he almost gasped.

"I can tell you a great deal about the Gray Brotherhood, seeing that I am one of the charter members," was the reply.

"You, Mr. Crucible?"

"Yes. It was organized in Italy ten years ago, when Mr. Henderson was making a tour of Europe. I can produce documents that will substantiate my story. But Henderson wasn't Henderson then. He disappeared from view, and tho I afterward believed the man Delaplane, whom we initiated in Florence, was really Hiram Henderson, I had no real proof of it; but the will you speak of makes the dark places as clear as noonday."

"You simply amaze me!" cried Connors, looking into the imperturbable face of his visitor.

"I am none the less amazed myself over this discovery. We will have to look this matter up, and I shall at once begin to

mass my proofs in order to obtain for our society what is coming to it."

"And rob the girl?"

"I don't want to rob any one," replied Mr. Crucible, with some acerbity, "but what's right is right."

"Certainly. It's a strange will. There must have been a provision in your constitution that dying members shall leave their property to the Brotherhood."

"There was just such an agreement," exclaimed Mr. Crucible. "What is the girl's share?"

"Less than sixty thousand."

"And ours?"

"Something over a million."

"Well, I'm glad to know that our brother kept his oath," commented Mr. Crucible, adjusting his coat as if for departure. "It's both bad and good business—bad for young Mr. Payne, but good for the Gray Brotherhood."

A few minutes later the visitor arose and announced his departure. He took out a handsome gold watch and consulted it.

"That's an odd pearl you have there," said Connors, his eyes on Mr. Crucible's cravat.

"Yes, a turtle's head. I got it in the West Indies."

At that moment the clock struck nine, and on the wind-swept deck of a steamer plowing the bay stood Hilda Hurst. It was nine by her watch, too.

Hilda Hurst had a valuable clew in her grasp, but she returns to find her rival has not been idle. Things have moved rapidly in the Henderson mystery. It looks like a hard blow for Hilda. But is it? The next installment teems with action.

Masculine Ideas.

"MOTHER, do you think I did wrong in not nominating Mrs. Jellybean for president of the Conservation Club?" inquired the somewhat young knitter. "John says that I should have nominated her because she and I are so chummy. You see, I thought Mrs. Rustler was so much more competent.

"But Mrs. Jellybean is very peeved about it, just as John said she would be, and she is going around saying that the ones who did the most work got the least recognition—meaning, of course, herself.

"No," responded the middle-aged knitter, "you did perfectly right in not nominating Mrs. Jellybean, for if she is the peevish kind she would find something else to be peevish about even if she had been made president. When people look for slights they invariably find them. I could get lots of slights if I wanted them. Anybody could."

"Yes, that's just it," replied the young knitter, "and I told John that, and he said that everybody was more or less peevish when it came down to brass tacks, unless they had a skin like a hippopotamus. 'It's all very well,' he says, 'to figure out how silly other people act, but probably you would act just the same if you were Mrs. Jellybean.'

"I told John that if it was recognition that Cora Jellybean was working for instead of the United States it was just as well we didn't elect her president."

"And what did John say to that?" inquired the middle-aged knitter. "You had him there, didn't you?"

"Yes, I had him, all right. All he could say was a lot of generalities about there being more satisfaction in being president than in being a humble nominator. Anyway, he didn't have much use for any one who never showed any human weakness or made any mistakes of any kind. He had a cousin or something who was always so darned perfect and went around acting and talking and looking so perfect that he made him sick."

"Did John mean to insinuate that the Mrs. Rustler whom you nominated for president is like that?" inquired the middle-aged knitter.

"Most likely," replied the young knitter. "I know he always retires to the woodshed every time Mrs. Rustler comes to the house, and I know he doesn't like her at all."

The middle-aged lady shook her head wisely as if she understood.

"But when Mrs. Jellybean calls," added the young knitter, "John never retires to the shed at all. He sticks around and we can't get rid of him. He sticks around and talks to Mrs. Jellybean."

The middle-aged knitter nodded sagely.

Over the Wires.

MUCH has been heard of late concerning cipher messages; but if you were in mid-Atlantic and wished to send a "wireless" to your husband and tell him—with all respect to economy—that the weather was perfect, your health good, food satisfactory, cabin comfortable, passengers congenial, what cipher would you invent? Could it be packed into two words?

A lady who crossed from New York lately, on some war-work mission, did the trick. The husband she had left behind she knew would be playing poker every evening at the club, so she chose a time when he would just be in the thick of it to send him the all-inclusive message of perfect satisfaction: "Royal Flush," which is the best hand a poker player can hold.

Last Half of
The Ruby Eyes of Death

By Willard Lincoln

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PART II.

"WHAT is it?" cried the chief detective. "Who is it? Where is he?"

"Where's who and what's what?" asked the millionaire collector in amazement at the sight of the operatives.

"But you called us? What is it?" Bryan demanded.

"I called you? You're crazy. I——"

"Surely you heard Mr. Trask call us, Professor Bronson?" exclaimed the detective, in perplexity.

Suddenly the light of understanding shone in Trask's eyes.

"Good!" he cried. "It's all right, Bryan. I was just trying you out. I wanted to see how quickly I could get you here—in case I really needed you. Now you may go."

Far from being satisfied, the chief operative looked from the millionaire to me, shook his head and then led his men away.

"Lucky I had my wits about me, Bronson. If those fellows knew Mentuhetep could make them see things, all my money wouldn't hire them to stay in the house.

"Come on, let's get out of here before I see something else."

Only too glad to get Trask away—and to get away myself—from those terrible blood-red eyes, I took the millionaire's arm and steadied him as we walked away from the treasure-room.

As he swung the door shut, Trask ordered brandy and sodas, and we drank them in the library.

"Did your adept have anything to do with that figure, or was it just my nerves?" he demanded, when the servant had withdrawn.

"A little of both, perhaps," I replied.

For some time there was silence between us, and then Trask exclaimed:

"Is there nothing you can do to counteract that old devil, Bronson? If you can't, if I've got to see things every time I go into that room, I shall go mad."

"The only thing is to deaden your mind, Trask," I answered. "You can do that in two ways; either by taking a drug so powerful that it will put you into a deep sleep, or by getting drunk—dead, paralyzed drunk. Of the two, I think the drug would be better. Before the drink acted you might see too many things."

"No drugs for mine, thank you," returned the millionaire. "If there's anything going to happen, I want to be on hand.

"There isn't enough wine or liquor in my wine cellar to get me drunk today, so I reckon I'll just stay as I am."

"As you like," I answered. "Besides, we needn't go into the treasure-room again today."

"Right you are. And now let's have lunch."

Marveling at a man who could think of food at such a time, I nevertheless gladly acquiesced in hope that food might dull his mental faculties. But the attempt was to prove abortive.

After the soup, we had brook trout, and as Trask's plate was set before him he jumped. Then, leaning over toward me, he whispered:

"What color are those trout eyes?"

"Why, there aren't any eyes," I answered.

At my words, the millionaire rose from his chair, exclaiming:

"Let's take a walk. My head aches."

Making the excuse that I must get into my walking boots, I sought out Bryan.

"Telephone to Dr. Gwathmey and ask him to come over at once," I ordered. "Don't take a 'no' from him. When he arrives, bring him to join Mr. Trask and me. We'll be down near the lake. As you join us, you talk to Mr. Trask while I explain matters to Dr. Gwathmey. Be as quick as you can."

And without giving the operative time to ask the questions I knew he had ready, I turned on my heel, went to my room, put on my walking boots and rejoined my host.

Heading toward the lake, I was setting a good pace when Trask exclaimed:

"You were wrong about the trout eyes, Bronson. They were red—just like my rubies. I looked at all on my plate and on yours and they were all red. I——"

"I'll bet I can jump farther than you can, Trask," I interrupted. "Come on—for whatever you like."

The suggestion amused my host and he laughed heartily.

"What, you, you little bit of a man, jump farther than I can? Why, I can step as far as you can jump." And again he laughed.

"The proof of the pudding is in the eating," I retorted hotly, for I have always been sensitive about my height, or, rather, lack of it. And drawing a line on the sand of the beach, I toed it and jumped.

I covered a fair distance and bade Trask equal it with a step, which he did, to my amazement. Again we tried and kept on trying, until a voice suddenly called out:

"Look out, Trask. You'll make Bronson pull his spinal column apart."

At the words we both turned, and it was with relief that I beheld Dr. Gwathmey and Bryan approaching.

"What brings you over?" asked the millionaire.

"Can't a doctor call on any of his friends without their thinking he is on a professional visit?" returned Gwathmey. "I was driving by and thought I'd drop in. Reckon it's lucky I did, or you'd have Bronson pulling himself apart.

"What's the game, anyhow?"

"Oh, Bronson thought he could jump farther than I can step," Trask answered. "But he can't. You're not much bigger than he is. Want to try?"

"Just a minute, Mr. Trask," interposed the chief operative, and leading the millionaire aside, he began to talk earnestly to him.

"Trask is in the devil of a mess over those jewels," I told Gwathmey. "I want you to stay right with us from now till after midnight, at least. An old Egyptian adept is working telepathy on him.

"Trask won't take a drug, so I don't know of anything we can do but stay with him."

And then I went into the matter of his call on me and all that had happened since our arrival at Heart's Delight.

"Is there anything we can do to combat the adept?" Gwathmey asked, as I finished.

"Nothing but a drug—and he won't take one."

"Oh, won't he? Just leave that to me, Bronson. Fortunately, I have my medicine case with me. When do you want to put him under? I'll have to do it in his food."

"Then, we'll wait till dinner," I replied, and we walked over to Trask.

Never did schoolboys indulge in more horseplay and "stunts" than we did during that afternoon, and when at last dusk fell, we were all mighty tired.

Arrived at the house, our host was urging the doctor to stay to dinner, when there came a rustle of silk, and Mrs. Trask appeared with a delightfully pretty girl at her side.

"Why, Helen, I didn't expect you till day after tomorrow," said Trask, his face clouding.

"Oh, don't worry! We're going back again in the morning," she laughed. "I had to come into town for a lecture this afternoon and I brought Miss Tracey with me."

"And Mrs. Trask promised me you'd show me the wonderful rubies!" cried the girl, after the introductions.

At the words the millionaire started, then murmured, "Why, yes, of course," and led the way to the treasure-room, while Gwathmey and I mentally wrung the beautiful neck of Miss Tracey.

We had succeeded in getting Trask out of himself, and now this young girl had in a moment undone all our work. For as the millionaire placed his hand on the combination we could see that it shook.

With cries of delighted amazement, Miss Tracey gazed at the wonderful rubies, then ran directly to them.

"What beauties! Do tell me all about them, Mr. Trask. Where in the world did you ever find them?"

"They once belonged to an Egyptian pharaoh named Mentuhetep II.," began Trask, when his wife interrupted:

"Oh, Harrison, that makes me think! We had the most wonderful time this afternoon. Instead of the lecture, Mrs. Van Tuyl had the most remarkable old man there. He said he was an adept and the things he did are really beyond belief.

"I don't know now whether the things really happened or whether he hypnotized us. Anyway, it was most wonderful. After his demonstration we were all introduced to him.

"When he heard my name he drew me aside and, looking at me with eyes that seemed to burn into my very soul, he said:

"'Mrs. Trask, if you love your husband tell him that only fools match themselves against the masters, and tell him that Mentuhetep XIII. sent that message to him.'"

As the millionaire heard the words he staggered, but quickly recovering himself, he exclaimed:

"Where did you say the adept was?"

"Why, at Mrs. Van Tuyl's."

"And here I've been turning heaven and earth to find him!" he cried. "Bronson, hurry and call up and tell Bryan."

Amazed at the strange turn of fate by which the man for whom Trask's detectives had been scouring the city should be at the house of one of his most intimate friends, I quickly got Mrs. Van Tuyl on the telephone, only to learn that the adept had left immediately after his demonstration, saying that he intended to go East that evening.

To my inquiries, she said that he had come to her with letters from the British administrator in Cairo, and that he had been living at the Depuyster, one of Chicago's most exclusive and fashionable private apartments.

Frantically I called the Depuyster, only to learn that the adept, with his retinue of four servants, had left the apartment house, bag and baggage, in two motor cars some hours before.

Seeking out Bryan, I ordered him to have the warning to hold up the two machines sent broadcast, and returned to the others.

"What did you learn?" demanded Trask, making no effort to conceal his excitement.

Rapidly I told him.

"But why did you want to see him, Harrison?" asked his wife, surprised at her husband's emotion.

"Oh, I had a couple of questions I wanted to ask him," said the millionaire. Then he burst out: "To think he's been right under our noses and a couple of hundred men couldn't locate him! It's maddening!"

The words of the outburst caused Mrs. Trask to open her eyes in wonder.

"What are you keeping from me, Harrison?" she asked, her woman's intuition causing her to realize that there was something afoot of which she was ignorant. "And what are all these strange men doing about the place? I meant to ask you before, but I forgot it."

Mr. Trask cleared his throat to speak, but before he could do so a cry came from Miss Tracey, who had been gazing at the rubies during all the conversation. We rushed to her side.

"Oh, look! Look!" she cried again. "The eyes are winking!"

"Nonsense, Marie!" exclaimed Mrs. Trask. "You've simply been looking at them too long. Run away now and dress for dinner."

Reluctantly the girl obeyed, and when she had passed thru the door Mrs. Trask demanded:

"What is it, Harrison? I know it's something to do with those terrible rubies. You simply must get rid of them. If you don't, I shall!"

Instantly Trask stiffened.

"Helen," he said, in a strange, tense voice, "if you ever enter this room alone I will never forgive you!"

A moment Mrs. Trask looked into her husband's eyes.

"Very well!" she exclaimed. "But you must choose between those rubies and me. I will not pass another night, after tonight, under the same roof with them.

"And now please explain the presence of these strange men."

"The police seemed to think burglars might pay us a visit," lied her husband. "But don't worry. We are amply protected. And now you, like your friend, run along and dress for dinner."

In silence we left the treasure-room, both of us forcing our host along, tho

Read This Now

HARRISON TRASK, a ruthless industrial magnate, suddenly at the height of his power turns to the pursuit of a hobby—the collection of jewels of death. Two famous ruby eyes have been purchased by him—stolen from the tomb of Mentuhetep II., a pharaoh of ancient Egypt, and he has been warned to return them to the tomb or suffer certain death. He decides that he must keep the jewels. On the night which is to mark the return of the ruby eyes or his death, he plants a force of detectives about his estate and summons a famous Egyptologist to watch with him in his hall of jewels. Strange and dreadful influences soon are brought to bear on this man who has defied fate. He imagines the eyes of a picture move and that a sword in the painting is aimed at his heart.

NOW GO ON WITH THE STORY.

he begged for another look at the rubies.

"Set the time lock," suggested Gwathmey, as Trask swung the door. "You won't wish to come in here again after dinner. That fool girl would have us all insane with the winking eyes and things, and I've always wanted to see how a time lock was set."

"All right," our host agreed, and then, giving me a look fraught with significance, he added: "I'll set the lock for ten minutes after 12 in the morning."

Feigning an interest he did not feel, Gwathmey watched while the delicate mechanism was set, and when the task was done we all turned away in evident relief.

As he had not brought his evening clothes, the Doctor went into the library while Trask and I dressed.

But, as he told me afterward, no sooner had our host gone to his room than he hurried to the kitchen and, under the pretext of cooking a special dish for the millionaire, he mixed a sleeping potion in the food and gave instructions that it be served to the master of the house.

Thanks to Miss Tracey, the meal which we men all feared was a very merry affair, but scarcely had we finished than Trask complained of feeling drowsy and, excusing himself, went to his rooms.

On one pretext and another Gwathmey and I left the ladies in turn.

I went first and ordered Bryan himself to take his stand outside the millionaire's door, after making a thoro search of his rooms and those of Mrs. Trask, and to admit no one but Dr. Gwathmey or myself.

"Your men are all placed, I suppose?" I asked, as I started to turn away.

"Yes, sir. A man on the ground under each of the windows in both Mr. and Mrs. Trask's rooms. Inside the house there are two men on every floor. Others are mingling with the servants. If any one moves about during the night, I have given orders for him to be brought to me."

"Sounds complete," said I. And to myself I added: "I don't believe that Mentuhetep can actually kill a person by telepathy. I've never heard of its being done—and if he sends a human to do the deed, Bryan's men should give him a warm welcome."

Gwathmey, of course, went up to see how Trask was getting along under the opiate, and the expression on his face when he returned told me that all was well.

At half after 10, we all retired to our rooms, the Doctor coming into mine to keep the vigil with me.

"When do you think the danger will be most acute?" he asked me, as we sat smoking.

"From half after 11 till 12," I answered.

"Then we'll go into Trask's room at 11:30," he announced. "But why do you think that if Trask is alive at midnight he is out of danger?"

"Because when an adept says he will do a thing within a given time and fails, he pays the penalty with his life. As it is Mentuhetep XIII. who has threatened Trask's life, if he escapes him, Mentuhetep will take his own life—and it will be a long time before any one else makes the attempt to recover the rubies."

"Well, I hope you are right," said the Doctor. And with our eyes on the clock, we smoked and talked until the hands pointed to twenty-five minutes after 11.

"Time to go in," said Gwathmey, and getting to our feet, we each took one of the automatics I had borrowed from Bryan and started for Trask's rooms.

"Everything all right?" I asked the chief operative, as we reached the door before which he stood guard.

"Everything out here, sir, and I haven't heard a sound inside," he answered.

"Good. We're going in to watch until midnight," said the Doctor and, opening the door, he started in, then stopped.

"My God! Bronson! It's been done! Bryan, call your men and watch every door and window!" he cried.

With a bound I was beside him.

On the bed whose white linen was fast turning to crimson lay Trask, a jeweled dagger buried in his breast.

"Murdered—and under our very noses!" gasped Gwathmey.

"Steady, man! Not so loud!" I cautioned. "We must not alarm Mrs. Trask. Perhaps he may not be dead."

At the faint hope roused by my words, the Doctor hastened to the side of the bed and, raising one of Trask's hands, felt the pulse.

"Dead!" he murmured. "Murdered! My God! What cunning, with a house full of detectives and the grounds alive with them!"

By this time the operatives were gathered at the door.

"Rouse all the servants and have the maids call Mrs. Trask and Miss Tracey," I commanded the butler. "Bring them all to the hallway outside this door.

"Bryan, look to the windows. See if they are unfastened."

"We've just done it, sir. They are all locked, just as they were when I examined them after Mr. Trask went to bed."

By this time, the servants, most of whom were still up because of a feast they were having in their hall, arrived at the door.

Suddenly a maid dashed from her mistress' room.

"Mrs. Trask's been murdered, too!" she wailed. "I can't wake her up!"

At the dread announcement, Gwathmey and I rushed into her rooms.

There on the bed lay the mistress of Heart's Delight. But no blood was crimsoning the linen, and there was a smile on her face.

Hastily the Doctor examined her.

"Her body is warm and I think she is breathing," he said, after moments that seemed years to the rest of us. "Some one give me a mirror!"

Quickly the maid fetched one from her mistress' dressing table.

Taking it, Gwathmey held it over Mrs. Trask's mouth, while the rest of us watched breathlessly. At the end of two minutes, he removed it. "Thank God! There's moisture!" he exclaimed. "She's alive. Quick, Bronson, 'phone Chalmers to come out from the St. Mary's Hospital and bring some nurses and his oxygen tanks.

"Some of you open those windows." And he began first to shake the mistress of Heart's Delight and then to chafe her hands.

"Does your mistress take drugs?" Gwathmey suddenly demanded of the maid.

"No, sir."

"She took one tonight," exclaimed Miss Tracey.

"How do you know?" asked the Doctor.

"Because I gave it to her. After she dismissed her maid, Mrs. Trask said she wished she could go to sleep, but that she didn't feel sleepy and was afraid she would lie awake and worry over those rubies and the burglars.

"I have been taking sleeping powders, and I said I'd get one of mine. So I did. I fetched two and she took them both."

"What were they?" the Doctor asked.

"I don't know."

"Got any more?"

"Yes."

"Fetch them."

The Doctor continued rubbing Mrs. Trask till Miss Tracey returned.

Taking one of the powders she brought, he tasted it.

"Veronal!" he exclaimed. "And not enough in two dozen to produce such a coma. It's beyond me."

As Gwathmey worked over the wife of the murdered millionaire, I turned to Miss Tracey.

"Have you any idea what time it was when you left Mrs. Trask?" I asked.

"Yes, it was just 11."

"How do you know?" demanded Bryan.

"I heard the chimes ring just as I entered my room."

"Did you hear any sound in Mr. Trask's room?" I asked.

"No, and I was with Mrs. Trask from the time we came upstairs till I left just at 11. Mr. Trask was alive then."

"How do you know?" Bryan demanded.

"Mrs. Trask opened the door into his room, went in and fixed his pillows and then came back and told me he was sleeping 'like a baby.'"

"That seems to put the time of the murder between 11 and 11:30," said Dr. Gwathmey.

"Bryan, take the servants down to their hall and question them.

"Adams," and he turned to the butler, "when Dr. Chalmers arrives, send for me at once."

When we were alone, save for Miss Tracey, the Doctor turned to me.

"Bronson, can you make anything of this coma?" he asked.

"Considering that Mentuhetep is concerned in this business, I should say it was hypnotic."

"Jove! I believe you're right!" Gwathmey exclaimed. "But——"

"Dr. Chalmers has arrived, sir," announced a servant.

The Doctor, Miss Tracey and I left Mrs. Trask alone in her room and hurried downstairs.

Rapidly Gwathmey outlined the situation.

"As Bronson suggests, it sounds like a hypnotic sleep," exclaimed Chalmers. "In that case we can only watch and——"

"S-sh!" gasped one of the nurses, pointing toward the stair.

Quickly we turned and stood in silent amazement.

Her silk dressing gown held about her by one hand, Mrs. Trask was feeling her way down the banisters of the stairway with the other. In breathless suspense we watched.

Pausing at the foot of the stairs, she stood swaying gently, while Gwathmey, Chalmers and the nurses crouched that they might spring and catch her should she fall.

But after tottering a moment, Mrs. Trask gathered the skirts of her dressing gown about her and started down the hall.

"She's going to the treasure-room!" gasped Miss Tracey.

"Keep quiet, on your life!" breathed Chalmers. "If you frighten her or awaken her like this, her mind will be gone forever."

Groping slowly, with evident effort, eyes wide open but apparently seeing nothing, Mrs. Trask advanced down the hall to the door of the treasure-room. For several minutes she fumbled over the lock, then suddenly swung the door in.

With ill-suppressed cries of amazement, the rest of us rushed down the hall—and stood rooted in the doorway.

Straight to the marble pedestal on which rested the ruby eyes stolen from the tomb of Mentuhetep II. went Mrs. Trask. Once she put out her hand and touched the death gems, only to draw it back with a cry as tho of pain.

Then a quiver ran thru her body. Tightly she drew her dressing gown about her; then, with a lightning movement, she reached out her hand, seized the blood-red eyes of ruby and rushed across the room, up the steps and along the hall.

So rapid had been her action that we scarcely had time to draw back and give her free passage room.

Arrived at the door of the library, she paused, then entered. Direct to the desk of her murdered husband she went. Drawer after drawer she searched, gave up, turned her head as tho to listen, then suddenly reached down, tore a strip from her silken dressing gown and, wrapping the rubies in it, laid them on the desk.

A second search produced a small wooden box in which she placed the silk-bound gems of death. Still another ransacking of the drawers resulted in the bringing forth of wrapping paper and string.

Working hurriedly now, she tied up the package, then reached for a pen.

With firm hand she wrote:

"American Express Company,
"Cairo, Egypt.

"To be called for."

Again she looked in a drawer, brought forth a sheet of note paper and wrote:

"Adams, the first thing in the morning take this package into Chicago and send it, prepaid, by the American Express.
HELEN TRASK."

Her task finished, she pushed the package and paper from her, rubbed her hand across her forehead, then arose and went to her room, where she took off her dressing gown and returned to bed.

As her breathing became stronger and stronger, we withdrew, leaving the nurses to watch for any change.

As we gathered in the dining-room and drank the brandy and sodas the butler brought us, Bryan exclaimed:

"My God! Does it mean that she killed Trask—murdered her own husband?"

All eyes turned to me.

"Undoubtedly," I said. "But it was only a murder by proxy. Mentuhetep XIII. is the real culprit. Thru his marvelous power as an adept he hypnotized Mrs. Trask and forced her to work his will, which was the killing of her husband in revenge for his purchase of the blood-red ruby eyes that were stolen for him from the tomb of his ancestor, Mentuhetep II., in Thebes."

After a consultation, Gwathmey, Chalmers and I decided to permit the disposal of the accursed death gems that Mrs. Trask had made.

And we further decided that the unfortunate woman should never be told the truth about the death of her husband.

All the servants except Adams, the butler, were discharged, with largesses that would seal their lips, and new ones were hired.

Several months elapsed before Mrs. Trask regained her usual health, and when she did, it was explained to her that she had been thru a severe attack of brain fever, during which time her husband had been stricken with pneumonia and had died.

And when, one day, she sent for me, and asked me to go into the treasure-room and remove the blood-red ruby death stones and cast them into the lake, I went thru the pretense of doing so.

"That room is accursed!" she exclaimed, when I returned. "I wish you would give the other gems to some museum. I intend to tear down the treasure-room. It haunts me."

The End.

"Murdered, and Under Our Very Noses," Gasped Gwathmey.

"My God! What Cunning, With a House Full of Detectives."

A Human Centipede.

AN IRISH housekeeper was showing to some visitors the family portraits in the picture gallery.

"That officer there in uniform," she said, "was the great-great-grandfather of the present owner of the property. He was as brave as a lion, but one of the most unfortunate of men. He never fought a battle in which he did not have a leg or arm carried away."

Then she added, proudly:

"He took part in twenty-four engagements."

Breaking the Iron Ring

By Ernest A. Young

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This Will Post You

WALDO EDMUNDS, president of the Edmunds Manufacturing Company in the town of Hamilton, is boss of the leading political party. Grace is his daughter. Arnold Fay, self-made man, is secretary of the company. Dwight Jackson, a creature of Edmunds' making, is mayor. He has his eye upon Grace. The better element of the town picks Fay to run for mayor, and he accepts even tho he knows it will cost him his job. Grace fails to make him change his mind. Later he sees a woman he believes to be Grace in an automobile with a disreputable character, Conway, also known as Corney. Edmunds demands Fay withdraw from the mayoralty race. He refuses. Fay's candidacy is now backed, very cautiously, by the News, the city editor of which, Cowdrick, is a friend of Fay's. Edmunds tries to bring about Fay's resignation from the company, but dares not openly discharge the secretary, lest it become known he is persecuting him for political reasons. Grace Edmunds calls on Fay to protest against his endangering his future thru political enmities, then assures him that she will not lead the woman vote against him. Fay receives an anonymous letter appointing a place outside the city limits for an interview with regard to his own interests, political and personal. Arrived there at night at the appointed time, Fay is lassoed by an unseen foe and dragged from his car.

The above is enough to put you in touch with the chapters which have been published. You would enjoy the story more if you read it in full. The back copies in which the earlier chapters appear can be purchased from our agents, news dealers or by mail direct from the office of publication. The story began in Ledger No. 9, dated March 2.

CHAPTER VII.

THE ADVENTURE.

WAS this cheap ruffian attack another sample of what the Ring might resort to, for a change? Had they come to the end of their wits so early in the game, so that they must enlist the services of a gang of toughs?

In a vague, dreamy guise such questions as these filtered thru Fay's semi-consciousness some time after he had fallen with stunning violence upon the frozen ground. His head ached and he felt stiff and sore all over. An attempt to rise hurt him intolerably. Besides, that noose, or something like it, still held his arms down at his sides. He thought his eyes were open, but if they were they were met only by a velvety blackness.

A horrible suspicion that he had been stricken blind assailed him and caused a sweat to start out on his face. He wondered if that splitting pain had anything to do with the awful darkness. Had the nerve connection betwixt eyes and brain been cut off by an injury of which he was becoming more and more acutely sensible?

Fay uttered a hoarse outcry. Instantly something that smelled like rubber and felt like coarse cloth was slapped over his face and pressed so tightly that he could hardly draw in a breath.

"You'll have to cut out the hollering," said a voice which was easily recognizable as Corney's. There were other muffled voices that mumbled the orders which Corney seemed to be commissioned to make audible to the prisoner, as spokesman.

"You ain't going to be hurt serious if you keep quiet," the vagrant interpreted, while the pressure upon Fay's nose and mouth relaxed slightly. "But you just got to can the noise, Mr. Fay."

The victim was reassured, meanwhile, as to the condition of his eyes. He was not blind, the darkness being due principally to the rubber blanket that had been thrown over him, face and all. The pain in his head was subsiding. As his consciousness became clearer, the unreasoning terror, which was like that of a nightmare, subsided. Fay became half angry, half amused.

"What is this ridiculous nonsense that you are up to, Conway?" he demanded, his voice having a muffled sound thru the rubber blanket.

There was another brief whispered conference among his captors.

"It ain't exactly nonsense, Mr. Fay," said Corney at last. "But it needn't worry ye too much, they says. You'll have to dope out what it means for yourself, they says, for I ain't supposed to do much talking."

"You have handled me rather rough if it is just for a joke," said Fay. "Tell me what you have done with my car."

"Your car is all right," returned Corney. "And they tells me to say you won't have much use for it for a spell."

"Take this infernal blanket off my face, can't you?" Fay exclaimed.

Another whispered talk, and then, from Corney:

"They says not quite yet. Not till we've got you to a certain place. And they says for you not to try singing out to attract attention unless you wants another rap on the dome. This ain't no joke, Mr. Fay, they says."

Fay realized the futility of trying to get anything definite in the way of information so long as all the talking had to be done thru Corney. Evidently it would be better to await further developments.

They were in deadly earnest, whatever their game, and Fay grew anxious as he realized how great the embarrassment to his campaign would be if he were detained for a considerable length of time. It would also compromise his position as secretary of the Edmunds Company.

He had not the slightest notion as to the length of time he had been unconscious, or how far they had carried him from the place of attack. All he was certain of was that he had been removed from his car and taken to some place quite a distance from the highway. It was evident that his captors were still apprehensive of discovery and they seemed to be preparing to make his captivity more secure.

Suddenly he felt that he was being lifted from the ground by two men, one at his shoulders, the other at his feet. In this fashion he was hastily carried over what may have been a distance of a hundred yards. Then he was swung up into a cart, like a bag of potatoes, and the cart immediately began to pitch and jolt over rough frozen ground.

Fay got the impression, partly from the motion, partly because he could hear no sound of hoof-beats, that the cart was being hauled by man, instead of by horse-power. It kept on for half an hour, occasionally halting for a rest. It seemed to Fay as if the cart was being dragged over the uneven surface of a field or pasture instead of along a road or beaten track.

At last it stopped and Corney spoke. "I'm tired of being a hoss," he said.

Another voice, disguised by a husky note, as if the speaker had a bad cold, then spoke.

"A horse or machine would have given us away if we had taken them along," the new speaker said. "As it is we are safe. The next lap of the journey will put him out of the world, as it were—unless, by the way, the gentleman prefers to subscribe to a sworn agreement. Mr. Fay, you may propose something now, if you have anything on your mind that you would like to relieve yourself of."

"Take the blanket off my face, then," said Fay.

Corney promptly complied with this demand and the prisoner was then able to look up at the clouded sky, and, by turning his head from side to side, he could view the high board sides of the cart on the floor of which he was lying.

He attempted to sit up; but Corney thrust him forcibly back. His head struck on the armful of hay which had been placed under it for a pillow.

"The stiller you lie," admonished Corney, "the more comfort'ble you'll be. You was jest told you might propose something, that's all."

"How do I know what is expected of me? Say what you want—name the game—set your price, if that is what you are after—then I will know what to figure on."

The husky voice, coming from beyond the rear end of the wagon, then cut in. "Will you make a sworn agreement, Mr. Fay?" it asked.

"Not without knowing what it is."

"First agree not to make any trouble for anybody over the little trick we have played at your expense tonight. Of course, you are to be returned in that case safe in the city."

"I might agree to that if I were to be taken back to my car without further delay or annoyance," said Fay.

"That isn't quite all you will have to agree to. You must say that you will get out of the—of the—political race," stammered the speaker, as if it was not an easy matter to make this proposal.

Fay laughed. "I thought so," he exclaimed. "And so the Ring has got down to abducting the opposing candidate as they might do down in Mexico, or Nicaragua! Who are you, anyhow? Your name isn't Dwight Jackson, I hope!"

Fay laughed again, and at the same time Corney asked:

"Shall I swat him one on the dome? He ain't within a mile of coming to terms."

"No, no!" answered the husky voice, hastily. "We will have to play out this joke to the limit, that's all. When a chap went to college as a freshman they used to haze him. They did all kinds of things to him, and if he was a good sport he didn't make any kick afterward. What is the matter of doing the same thing when a quiet citizen that is doing well enough in an office position gets a hunch that he can reform a city, and starts into politics? He gets hazed—see? And if he's a good sport he'll take what comes when he finds there is no help for it."

"He may not measure up to your idea of a good sport," Fay cut in, "but he says flatly that your lay-out won't go at all. I take it that you are a lot of cheap toughs, Corney being the only sample you have dared to show in the open. Probably you are after some money. I don't even suspect the Iron Ring of paying you for this job. Now how much do you expect me to put up as the price of my simplicity in letting you catch me? I really deserve to pay something."

Arnold Fay could hear a rumble of protests, three or four speaking at once. One voice, evidently disguised, sounded like a woman's.

This called up a new lot of conjectures. There was certainly no end of novelty in the situation, and there was an unlooked-for twist to every circumstance.

"It isn't money we're after," protested the husky voice, "and we are not the cheap toughs you take us to be."

"That's good," laughed Fay. "I was judging by your way of dealing with me. First, you lasso a man cowboy fashion, batter his head on the frozen ground until he loses his senses, then you drag him off across lots in a cart, having in the first place enticed him to your rendezvous with an anonymous letter. That was your plan, quite nicely worked out. Still you are sensitive because you are called cheap toughs! Well, what is the next word? What'll you try to do to me next?"

"We prefer to return you unharmed to the city," said the spokesman.

"Do it, then. I will agree to enter no complaint, and I won't even try, in that case, to find out who are Corney's backers."

"But you will have to make the other agreement I mentioned. You must pull out of the mayoralty contest."

"What if I refuse?"

"We will have to try out that hazing stunt and hold you so you won't show up in the city in time for the campaign. Stories will float around implying that you got cold feet and ran away."

Fay had no illusions as to the seriousness of the situation should his captors persist in carrying out their plans. Even many of his warmest supporters would be led to believe a plausible-sounding story of the kind suggested.

There had been opposition candidates in other years and it had been freely reported that they had been bought off. Fay knew there were those who predicted the same thing would happen in his case. If he were to disappear from the city not many would suspect the truth. They would nearly all say he was either bought off or intimidated.

"I'll mention one thing more while I'm about it," the husky voice resumed. "We didn't have anything to do with decoying you with the anonymous letter. So get that idea out of your head."

"Is that so?" exclaimed Fay. "I wonder if you don't expect me to believe most any kind of a statement."

"It is true," insisted the other. "The one who wrote you the letter asking you to go out on the River road tonight is really friendly to you. One of us happened to know such a letter had been written and we took advantage of it—that's all."

The explanation was spoken so convincingly that Fay decided to accept it.

"How about the one who did write the letter, and who probably expected to meet me?" he asked.

"He missed the connection. Nothing for either of us to worry about."

Fay subsided into silence, for it was no trifling decision that he was called upon to make. Not that he seriously considered the proposition to withdraw from the contest. For that matter, it appeared that he had been withdrawn, whether he agreed to anything or not.

If he could have been sure of a sufficient number of aggressive supporters who would be convinced that nothing short of forcible detention could account for his disappearance, he could afford to wait for them to act. But what if it were to be generally believed that he had sneaked off of his own accord? The masses are always fickle, he reflected. Sooner or later, every office aspirant finds this to be true.

Arnold Fay hardly thought of what his captors might do with him in case he should persist in defying them. All that concerned him was the probable effect of his disappearance upon the voting population of Hamilton.

"Jackson will play it up for all it is worth," he was thinking. "And it wouldn't be beneath him to throw out a question as to my record before I came to the city. He would play that up strong if he were sure I wouldn't come back in season to take part in the campaign. I'm in an infernally bad scrape any way I may look at it."

"Time is passing," reminded the husky voice. "You will have to tell us what, Mr. Fay."

"Every one of you may go to the devil—or anywhere else!" snapped Fay.

"Then you won't withdraw from the contest?"

"No, sir. You are a set of thugs, judging by the way you have dealt with me tonight. I'm not afraid to say I believe the Ring pays your price."

"If we were to release you unharmed you would say this sort of thing to the newspapers, probably. You are a natural-born fighter, and you would fight just the same even if you were sure of losing."

Fay did not reply to this. They had evidently hoped for a favorable result to their attempt to make him withdraw from the contest. Not that they underrated the quality of his backbone. As they looked at it, it was merely a question of choosing between withdrawing formally and framing the best excuse he could think of, or allowing it to appear that he had either been bought off, or flunked, with no chance left to square himself with his friends.

The one who had engineered Fay's capture banked high on his regard for his own reputation.

Fay began to consider the possibility of escaping from his captors. His legs were unhampered, but the noose still held his arms down at his sides. The rubber blanket covered him except his face, from which it had been removed.

He cautiously tested the strength of the rope that bound his arms and it slipped a little as a result of his effort. Another strain at the rope and the loop was loosened so he might, he felt sure, withdraw his arms altogether. Still he hesitated to cast off the noose and try for liberty. He would have to dispose of Corney in the first effort and then, after leaping to the ground, he would have to make a blind run across what appeared to be rough pasture land, pursued by he knew not how many of his captors.

Possibly, he thought, rather than allow him to escape, they might resort to shooting. At best it looked like a slender chance, and failure on his part would decide them to make a second attempt impossible.

But what else should he do? he asked himself. Should he let them dispose of him as they saw fit when that might mean ignominious and lasting defeat for him and the opposition to the Ring?

By waiting, he reflected, a better opening might present itself. Fay was not superstitious, but, like most of us, good luck and bad often seemed to run with him in streaks. Since deciding to go into the contest against the Ring there had been no setback until he had allowed himself to be enticed into this trap. Had he come, then, to a turning point in his fortunes?

"I'll get to be as superstitious as an old grandmother," he told himself. Then, to prove that he was not afraid of any backfire of luck, he slipped his arms clear of the noose, grasped one of the board sides of the cart and vaulted over it.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE BREAKAWAY.

ARNOLD FAY struck a surface of close-cropped grass, landing, as it happened, upon all fours. From this posture it was easy to spring to his feet and start off at a run. He took the direction away from the spot where he had heard the muffled voices of his captors. Whether he was running toward safety or more trouble was merely a guess.

Corney gave the alarm. "He's skipped!" the vagrant yelled. "Fay's a-runnin'!"

In a moment he was seen by the others, and two of them started in pursuit. At the same time Corney, who was on the cart, managed to stumble across his path.

Fay lunged a blow at the vagabond that sent him sprawling. Then his legs got more limber and he succeeded in working up to a pace that he had made a record with at a time when he was ambitious to become a miler, more years ago than he liked to reckon.

He saw some one running toward him from a point some distance from the group from which the two pursuers had detached themselves. This individual ran nearly as fast as he did and from

the advanced position at the start was bound to cut in ahead of him.

Fay braced himself to land another blow when he saw an encounter could not be avoided. Then, with a gasp, he realized that the one who would block his way was a woman.

Her slender figure was disguised by a heavy sport coat, and, with a mannish cap that protected her ears and hid the upper part of her face, her sex was not recognized until Fay was on the point of bowling her over as he had done in the case of Corney. He was brought to a standstill. She saw his clinched hand and spoke.

"Why don't you strike?" she demanded. "You believe in equal rights for women and men."

Her voice—a motion of her right hand—even a slight emphatic movement of her head—all reminded him of only one person—Grace Edmunds!

But he could not believe such evidence. It was too unthinkable. Had she not come only a few hours ago to tell him that she would not work with the women voters of the city for his defeat?

The situation would not allow time for speculation. The young woman, whoever she might be, was trying to block his way and he could not knock her down with his fist, as he would have done if it were a man that disputed his flight.

"So much," he exclaimed, "for letting the women into the game!"

She did not speak. He had been obliged to stop running to avoid colliding with the girl. Now he attempted to spring past her, but she flung herself in front of him with the agility of an athlete. His pursuers, as he was uncomfortably aware, were fast coming up with him.

He had been seized and spirited away from the city in a ridiculous manner and now, unless he were to escape from his captors, whoever they might be, he would find himself in a humiliating plight and the Iron Ring would score for the winning points. To convince the whole city that he had not run away or been bought off would be too much of an undertaking for his friends.

Not until then did he seize the young woman's arms and, with not an ounce more of force than was necessary for the purpose, he thrust her to one side. In the maneuver she was spun halfway about and for an instant she staggered dizzily.

"Coward!" She flung the epithet after him as he sprang past her at a pace that quickly left his pursuers out of sight.

Coward! In spite of his logic that he had used the mildest measures possible for getting out of the miserable trap which had been set for him, that word stung like the cut of a lash. It was not the epithet, either, so much as the voice, that rang in his ears, while his easy, trained runner's pace left his enemies hopelessly behind.

Of course, he assured himself, she could not have been Grace Edmunds. Yet the baffling likeness of voice and gesture reminded him of what he had observed upon another occasion, when the Edmunds limousine had picked up Corney in front of the saloon and the same voice, in a kindlier key, had spoken.

With all sounds of pursuit lost in the distance and no sign of his late captors about, Fay stopped to get his bearings. He had not the slightest notion as to his whereabouts, and, for aught that he knew to the contrary, he might be running away from the city instead of toward it.

Ordinarily this question would have been decided by the reflection of the city lights on the sky. But it had stopped snowing, the air had grown warmer and a fog had risen thick enough to obscure objects a quarter-mile distant.

In an amateur way Fay had always been observant of weather phenomena down to details that, nowadays, are rarely taken note of except by sailors and back-country farmers. He remembered that, earlier in the evening, the wind blew lightly from the southeast. He felt it now upon his face, laden with the fog, and this satisfied him as to the points of the compass.

The country on the west side of the city was level and swampy. On the east and around to the north and south there were slopes of pasture, small truck and dairy farms broken by patches of woodland.

"I'm facing the city," he decided. At the same time he noticed a rail fence and an open bar-way, and he started running again, for it was a down-slope.

The fog lifted a little and he caught the glimmer of a light. It was blotted out a moment afterward, but with his sense of direction assured Fay proceeded toward the point where he had seen the light.

He came out upon a narrow road and then he saw the light again, now close at hand. There were voices of men and women talking and laughing boisterously. A door was opened and closed with a slam, and then Fay heard the sputter of a motorcycle.

The machine struck out into the road and went chattering away toward the city.

"This is the Clayton Clubhouse," Fay decided. "One of the notorious resorts that the Ring is said to foster in return, it is also declared, for liberal payments to members of the city government for its exemptions. At least, that is the story. Well, I'll keep out. My innings in the game against that sort of thing will come a good bit later, if they come at all. I hope I know better than to try to overturn the universe in the name of reform."

Fay would have given the so-called clubhouse as wide a berth as possible, altho he was tempted at the same time to do a little spying on the place, now that he had such a good chance. He avoided the lighted area in front of the building, and as the street door was open and there were men and women on the stoop, Fay decided it were safer to cut across in the rear of the house instead of keeping along the highway.

A large barn, remodeled into a garage, stood at a little distance from the house. There were four automobiles lined up near this building and the number of one of these machines was, as it were, thrust upon Fay's consciousness. "My machine!" he exclaimed, loud enough to have been heard if any one had been listening.

It was so. His machine, from which he had been unceremoniously dragged some two hours earlier, had been run from the River road, where it was held up, to the Clayton Clubhouse, more than three miles from the spot where it had been captured.

A new significance was attached to this discovery. It indicated that the lawless trick had been perpetrated by persons connected with the Clayton resort. This, in turn, proved that the proprietors and frequenters of the place were ready to take a hand in the campaign to keep Arnold Fay out of the mayor's chair.

"Another straw," thought Fay. Then he began to calculate on the chances of seizing his car and using it in his return to the city.

"I guess it is worth a big try," he decided. "I can take my property wherever I find it, and this looks as if the luck-streak might be running my way again, if I only have the nerve to grab it."

To get away with his car without attracting the attention of some of the inmates of the house, some of whom were sure to be keenly on the watch, would hardly be possible, and he might have to fight for the possession of his property.

He went around to the rear of the house and approached his car from that quarter. He would have to back the machine out of the yard, unless he preferred to run it over a patch of hummocky open ground and down a steep pitch to the road.

He decided upon the last-mentioned plan. He had the starting plug in his pocket and without more ado he got into the machine and turned on the power. The sounds attracted no attention at first, and but for a sleepy chauffeur stretched out on the rear seat of a big machine alongside of Fay's he might have got away unobserved.

The chauffeur was having a bad dream and he sprang up with the impression that some one was trying to run away with his car. He let out a yell and then, espying Fay, exclaimed:

"Ho! Who're you? You ain't Jason. He told me to watch his car."

"This is my car," snapped Fay. "If you know what is good for you you will go back to sleep and forget that you saw me."

But the chauffeur had been enjoined by Jason to watch that nobody meddled with B9907, and the people who frequented the Clayton Clubhouse stood by one another, whether they were the high ones or their lackeys.

The chauffeur of the big car would have leaped to the seat of Fay's machine, but Fay had already started ahead and was swinging around the garage.

"Keep off," Fay warned, "or you'll face me in police court in the morning! You can tell Jason, when he shows up, that Arnold Fay took possession of his own property. Remember the name—Arnold Fay."

He shouted the name so it could not be misunderstood. At the same time the machine was bumping and reeling over the rough ground as it coasted down the steep grade to the road. There were a few shouts and a chatter of voices from the house and a half-dozen inmates, including the proprietor, ran out.

The name of Arnold Fay was caught and repeated. It brought consternation to the Clayton Clubhouse, for it was believed that Fay had come to spy upon the resort for first-hand evidence. Every man and woman there knew that Fay was bucking against the Iron Ring.

CHAPTER IX.
THE FIRST BLOW.

FAY did not get back to the city until after midnight. No attempt was made to overtake him after he left the clubhouse. Probably the proprietor had seen to it that his place should not be involved any deeper in the case of this man who was bidding defiance to the Hamilton Iron Ring. One never could tell what might happen.

It was 1 o'clock and Cowdrick was enjoying a breathing spell in the office of the city editor of the News. His face cleared of its worried look as Fay came in, after a hasty knock.

"What has kept you, Arnold?" Cowdrick asked. "I've been worrying my head off."

With a Gasp He Realized That the One Who Would Block His Way Was a Woman.

"A telepathic impression must have gripped you," laughed Fay. "I was abducted, escaped, and am back again."

"I wish," protested Cowdrick, "you would clear that remark of some of its ambiguity."

Fay briefly told the story of his adventure. He made light of the experience, declaring that he did not think there had really been any danger.

"It might all work into a film," said Fay. "But," he added, "if they had detained me until after the election it would have looked as if I had sold out and gone into retirement. That is the way the opposition would have rated it."

"Some might have put it that way," Cowdrick admitted. "But it would have been a dangerous game for them to play."

"Well, their plan, if such it was, fell thru. Now I want to know who was responsible for the claptrap. If you were to print my yarn people would say it was a newspaper fake, or one of my own to prejudice public opinion."

"Possibly." Cowdrick thrummed on the keys of his typewriter. "It is hardly the sort of story we would care to print, is it?" he asked.

"The result of printing the story would be too uncertain, and in any case it would hardly be worth while."

"You say there was a woman mixed up in it," Cowdrick suggested. "Did you get a glimpse of her?"

Fay told the rest of the story and the other whistled.

"Really," he protested, "that could hardly have been Miss Grace Edmunds, you know. There must have been a superficial resemblance that was deceptive at night."

"How about my seeing her the other night with Corney in the Edmunds limousine? I recognized the car by its style and number, and in them there could have been no mistake."

"Oh, well, she may have been with Corney, for she isn't above speaking a friendly word to the shabbiest vagrant that ever trod the pavements. But lining up with the gang that would pull off such a stunt as abducting and forcibly detaining you, and then trying to bind you by a pledge, is altogether a different business, and I don't believe you would be willing to swear it was Grace Edmunds that you saw."

"Then who was it that tried to cut me off when I was trying to run away from the gang, and who called me 'coward' when I pushed her out of my path?"

Cowdrick was jotting down some points that might be used if Fay's adventure should ever call for publicity.

"You are up against the Iron Ring," he reminded Fay, after a pause. "They haven't begun their fight against you yet. Do you suppose they are ready to throw up their hands? Why, they will do the last desperate thing to put you out of it. You seem to think this adventure was a bit of horseplay and not to be taken seriously, but let me tell you, you made a lucky breakaway and you want to look sharp for their next attempt."

"This is a modern city and we are quite a way from the Mexican border," laughed Fay.

Could he have trusted the law-enforcing authorities Fay would have told his story at police headquarters with some hope that the identity of his assailants would be discovered. It would be easy in any case to have Corney detained; but what, he argued, would be the use? Had the man not already faced a farcical deal in the Municipal Court?

When Arnold Fay passed thru the main office of the Edmunds Company the next morning, he was conscious of a scrutiny from Benton, the oldest man on the office force. He was not surprised half an hour later by a visit from the elderly bookkeeper.

"I'm taking a lot of personal risk, Mr. Fay, in coming to you in this way," said Benton, "but I'd rather hunt another job than to let matters go like this."

"You have nothing to fear, Mr. Benton, so far as my discretion is concerned," Fay promised.

"I was not afraid of you in that respect," said Benton. "I am going to say, while I am about it, that I have assurance of your support by nearly the entire office force. But I did not come to tell you that this morning. You received a letter yesterday asking you to meet somebody at 9 o'clock in the evening on the River road. I wrote that letter."

"And you failed to sign it," said Fay.

"For my own protection. I meant to tip you off before you met the appointment, but I did not have a chance. It seems you were shy about going to the place named. I was a little late myself because I had to do some dodging to escape observation. But I did not fail you there."

"I was at the spot on the minute," said Fay. "Something occurred, however, to call me away before you arrived. You admit that you were late."

"I am very sorry, sir, for I wished to tell you about a plan to make it appear that you were bribed or scared into giving up the fight against—I mean for——"

"I know," said Fay, as the other hesitated for a word that would be noncommittal. "You knew of such a plan, you say, and were going to warn me?"

"I knew of no details, except that it

Valoroso's Strange Vision

By Will Gage Carey

Valoroso was as cruel as he was wicked and his devilish ingenuity was at its best when he met Willets, Secret Service man. The ending is a knockout.

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CHAPTER I.

IN THE tranquil environs of the quaint village of Capistrano—at least, up to a comparatively recent date—lived a swarthy bandit named Pietro Valoroso, and his band of expert counterfeiters, actively engaged in making a fair grade of Mexican pesos from perfectly good Arizona silver, mixed, of course, with some certain alloy as best suited their purpose of profit.

Now, this activity on the part of Pietro Valoroso and his experts was a matter of no concern to the U. S. Government authorities while they confined their operations to a field south of the Rio Grande; but when it was learned that this notorious gang had moved northward and taken up an abode near Capistrano—well, that was a very different matter, and the authorities at Washington took notice and immediate action as well. A Secret Service man was sent out to run to earth the band of counterfeiters. The assignment fell to Stanlow Willets; and this slender, alert, keen-eyed individual took his departure immediately for the vicinity of the border.

Men older than Willets in the work of man-hunting, employed by the Mexican government, had for years been on the trail of Pietro Valoroso, and with but small success. It meant a name and reputation for Willets should he break up the gang; for Pietro's great skill as an artisan was exceeded even by the adroitness with which he ever eluded the keen-witted men sent out to effect his capture.

The orders Willets received from the department were brief, and not especially specific. He was left much to his own resources as to choosing the best manner of procedure. The chief, however, had thought best to offer a few words of caution in parting.

"Willets," he said, "if you get Pietro Valoroso he must be guarded with the utmost vigilance. He is tricky. Any consideration shown him is likely to prove costly. He is a renegade cutthroat, vain, boastful, superstitious; but you've got to hand it to him for being clever and resourceful. You've got a man's size job before you; but I believe you're equal to it; otherwise, I wouldn't send you. And now, Stanlow, good-by—and good luck."

Ordinarily, the chief was a man of few words; his orders were sharp, direct, incisive. The unwonted length of the parting address in this instance impressed the young Secret Service man with the significance of his mission to no slight degree; and on the long trip down to southern California, the parting words of his superior recurred to his mind many times. But his was the abounding confidence of youth; he felt supremely capable to cope with any condition or emergency which might arise.

The Mission San Juan Capistrano itself is a ruin—its structural outline, spiritual, venerable, yet still a ruin. The large sanctuary is bare and weather-beaten, the cloisters of the quadrangle are roofless; and the bones of padres long since forgotten lie beneath the tangled shrubbery; padres forgotten—save only for the swaying bells in the crumbling towers, which, still swinging in their lashings of rawhide, toll softly a requiem for the departed ones with each sighing gust of the breeze.

Tourists frequent the old Mission San Juan Capistrano; and it was in the guise of a tourist that Stanlow Willets—of the U. S. Secret Service—put up at the little village, and each day prowled devotedly around the musty ruins. Then he professed a desire to purchase land in the vicinity of the village, and began making trips out thru the country. On these jaunts he took with him a young Mexican named Juan Duprez—a local character of jovial countenance and disposition, but with a marked preference for idling rather than for any form of strenuous employment; for a gay cantina, a guitar and a cozy nook, rather than a spade and the hot, broiling sun!

Discreet inquiries by Willets had brought forth the fact that Juan Duprez possessed two strong burros, and had unlimited time at his disposal; that he knew every foot of ground for miles in any direction; was sagacious enough to be a suitable guide and adviser; and, perhaps, loquacious enough sometime inadvertently to make a remark or observation which might furnish a tangible clew. Promise of good pay, easy work and plenty of provisions had been quite sufficient to close a bargain with Juan—and the burros—which, from the start, proved satisfactory to all concerned.

In one respect only, in fact, did Juan Duprez prove disappointing—he could not be made to talk of Pietro Valoroso, beyond admitting he had heard the rumor that the Mexican counterfeiter was in hiding somewhere close by. Further than this he could not be led by Willets' most tactful queries. Whether this was due to an unassumed ignorance of the subject, a connivance with the bandit himself, or thru fear of him, Willets could not determine; and he dared not press the topic too closely, as such a course would be sure to arouse local suspicion against himself and his real purpose for being in Capistrano.

On the very first day out the Secret Service man found that on every other subject in the world, it seemed, excepting the one concerning which he wished most of all to hear, his wily guide was loquacity itself. He sang songs with a very fine tenor voice, but with very bad words; he told numberless stories with a local setting and himself always the hero; he told Willets about his sweetheart—Anita; of her he could talk for hours, and, strangely enough, without becoming in the slightest degree tiresome.

And they were having their troubles, those two lovers, Anita and Juan. Her parents, he confided, were wealthy and highly respected people; they did not exactly approve of Anita's choice—or rather, of his shiftless habits; the two were forbidden to meet.

"But, ah, senor, we do meet, for all that!" Juan exclaimed, on the ride homeward that first day. "My Anita—muy bonita—ver' beau-tee-ful! They can't keep us apart, now or ever, senor!"

And Willets, seeking an opening, had answered:

"Well, Juan, why don't you get rich? Then they won't try to keep you apart."

"Ah, yes, rich—but how, senor?"

"Lots of ways—if you'd work and hustle. They say, too, those in the band of Pietro Valoroso are becoming wealthy. Now, Juan, why don't you find where they are, and join them?"

"No, no! Not that!"

"Well, Juan," Willets added quickly, "I was only joking about you're joining them; but then—well, say you found out just where his gang holds out, why, that might be worth big money to you!"

"Listen, senor," Juan responded slowly, as tho in deep contemplation.

"Yes, yes"

"Tomorrow when we go out——'

"Yes, Juan?"

"I show you then some fine land, senor; you will be much pleased, manana'" Then he burst forth in joyous song—not a love tune this time, but one of patriotism and love of country:

"La tierra de Borinquen,
Un majico primor:
Y un cielo siempre lltimo,
Le sirve—de valor!"

And that, and in similar fashion, is how Willets was ever foiled when he sought to have intercourse with Juan Duprez concerning a certain Valoroso—counterfeiter of Mexican pesos.

Lower, Lower the Flame of the Candle Sank, Nearer Each Instant to the Cord, the Severing of Which Would Mean—Eternity.

CHAPTER II.

A WEEK passed, and the Secret Service man had found no semblance to a clew; then, returning home late one night with his guide, an incident came up which aroused suspicion, even tho it furnished little of a tangible nature to work upon. They had reached a portion of the road which wound along a strip of woods not far from the crumbling old mission, when Juan suddenly asked Willets to hold the burros. Then, with no word of explanation, the guide strode off thru the gloom toward the soft-tolling bells in the tower. When he returned, he appeared in unusually good spirits, and now, by way of excuse, mumbled something about having stopped to see a friend living close to the mission. There was a sly secretiveness about his manner, however, that made Willets distrustful. He felt that the movements of his genial guide, especially at night, should have been looked into more closely; perhaps Juan was in secret communication with the counterfeiters. He decided, too, that a little nocturnal investigation around the old mission might be worth while.

They returned to the village in silence; then parted, with an understand-

was to be sprung immediately—not later than today. But it isn't safe to discuss it here, is it, Mr. Fay? Not safe for either of us, I mean?" And the elderly bookkeeper sent a timid glance toward the closed door as he spoke.

"Probably not safe for you, for I assume there are some who are suspicious of all who may seem to be friendly to me. Thank you for the hint, Mr. Benton, and I will watch out."

Benton had sent memoranda in his hand and he went thru the form of consulting Fay about it. When he went out the memoranda had some explanations scribbled across it by Fay. It was immediately demonstrated that a seemingly silly subterfuge was necessary, for Benton met Waldo Edmunds just outside the door of Fay's office.

"Is Mr. Fay inside, Benton?" Edmunds inquired of the bookkeeper.

"He just came in, sir," said Benton. "There was a little matter of figures I wanted him to explain."

"Of course he could explain them," wheezed Edmunds, captiously. "He could explain anything, or a good many people seem to think he could. By the way, Benton, we of the company expect our employes, the office help especially, to stand by our interests, whatever may come up in the future. A word to the wise—you know the old saying, Benton."

This was a threat. The bookkeeper so understood it, and he wanted to fling it back into the teeth of Edmunds.

As the door was opened Fay could see by the face of his visitor that a new round was to be fought in the battle. Edmunds had been in a bad humor to start with, and his mood was not improved by the appearance of friendliness between Fay and Mr. Benton.

"Mr. Fay," the president of the company began, "I've come to deliver the last word about this secretary business."

"I will listen, Mr. Edmunds," Fay replied.

"At a meeting of the directors of the company, last night, every member of the board being present, it was unanimously voted to allow you twenty-four hours in which to resign, as secretary——"

"I told you," Fay broke in sharply "that I would not resign under any circumstances. I supposed you understood that. You might as well have made the limit twenty-four minutes."

"I had informed the gentlemen of your decision," Edmunds went on, "but they insisted upon following the usual course for doing such business. After passing the order, as I have stated it, it was then voted to declare the office of secretary to be vacant at the end of the time named, whether you resigned or not."

Fay's heart gave an exultant leap. Had a tangible personal issue been lacking, one had been supplied now.

"I had no idea," he said, speaking deliberately, "that they, or you, would make such a foolish break as that."

"What do you mean? That we—that I——"

"Exactly that," laughed Fay. But his next remark did not lack in seriousness. "We have not always been on bad terms with each other, Mr. Edmunds, and it is hard for me to believe that we are going to let a political matter smash all of our personal and business relations. We have—both of us—let our tempers go and we are both of us inclined to be obstinate. Now you have given me political capital if I choose to use it. But, to tell the truth, I have no disposition to drag in a personal quarrel."

"Drag in anything you please, Fay," snarled Edmunds. "But don't go whining about our broken friendship unless you wish me to brand you as a hypocrite. I never pretended to have any personal friendship for anybody."

Fay turned to his desk. "Very well," he replied. "I still have twenty-four hours—or, to be exact, twenty-three hours and fifty minutes in which to wind up my duties for the company. I shall wish to leave a clean desk to my successor, and with no strings hanging. Was there anything more, Mr. Edmunds?"

"One thing more, yes. Your successor was elected last night at the same meeting. You will receive a written notification of all I have reported to you, but I wanted to see you before you went. Have you forgotten my words the first time I spoke to you about your opposition to the company?"

"You said you would break me. I think that was your phrase," said Fay.

"Keep those words in mind. This is only the first blow."

Edmunds waited to observe the effect of his words. He could hardly believe the evidence of his eyes, as he saw Fay turn to his desk and become busy with the unopened mail.

For a moment the president of the company closed and unclosed his stubby fingers as if they itched to clasp the young man's throat. He had never been quite like this before, not even in the beginning of his tyrannical career. Yielding to a rage that was beyond his control he let one hand fall clutchingly upon Fay's shoulder.

"D—n you!" he bellowed. "I have a mind to pitch you out of here!"

Fay finds himself enmeshed in a startling predicament in the next installment, a piece from which it will take all his ingenuity to extricate himself. Can he do it? Read on and see what happens.

ing to meet at an early hour the next morning. Willets went to his hotel, ate supper, and repaired to his room for an hour's quiet smoke and rest. Shortly before 9 he extinguished the light, as tho about to retire for the night; then, buttoning his coat about him closely, and pulling his soft hat down low over his eyes, he made his way cautiously down into the street again.

His first thought was to locate Juan Duprez, and for this purpose he headed straight toward the Blue Moon cantina. He did not enter, but thru the open door he beheld his guide seated upon a table, playing a guitar and singing at the top of his voice, while a swarthy audience before him listened with every evidence of delight. From this convivial scene of assuredly innocent amusement Willets turned away, planning to drop by again later on. Meanwhile, he concluded to do a little cautious prowling in the vicinity of the old mission.

Overhead the sky was covered with a canopy of dark clouds, thru which, from time to time, the moon pierced some rift only long enough to cast a silver glow on a landscape soon plunged in murky gloom again.

Thru these intermittent intervals of light and shadows Willets made his way on past the scattered outskirts of the village. Behind him twinkled dreamily the lights of Capistrano; for a moment he stood watching them, then turned and plunged resolutely into the gloom of the trail ahead of him.

A mile or so farther on, the Secret Service man came in sight of an old, deserted mansion standing a little off the winding road, surrounded by a grove of giant eucalyptus trees. The house, once a pretentious building, had evidently been going down into decay for years. A portion of the high gable roof had fallen in, the blinds creaked dismally on rusty hinges, and the once carefully kept grounds now were given over entirely to a tangled growth of weeds and briers.

Willets remembered passing the place before with Juan; and his guide had told him uncanny tales of a white-robed figure that wandered at night thru the desolate grove, moaning as tho in great distress; and how, on reaching a certain point, it suddenly vanished with a parting wail of anguish. These stories had interested Willets at once; it occurred to him that now was a propitious time to pay a visit to this desolate place, which those of the village had learned to shun. He got out his pocket searchlight, and by its slender gleam made his way thru the tangled undergrowth.

Nothing within the gloomy walls of the deserted mansion showed the slightest evidence of human occupants, at least so far as he could discover, tho the moaning of the wind thru the broken cornices, the creaking of doors, and the mold and dismal ruin on every side made belief in the ghostly stories told by Juan now surprisingly easy. He gave up the search at length, left the murky chill of the gruesome interior, and started back thru the grove to reach that part of the trail from which he had diverged. Then, of a sudden, he came upon a narrow, winding pathway leading off thru the shrubbery. Clearly the path was still used, so he followed it up cautiously, ascertaining that it ended abruptly, after much tortuous winding, out upon the bank of a little river. And now the sound of muffled voices and the light dipping of oars, somewhere out there in the blackness over the water, caused him to conceal his light, and to crouch down in the rank growth of weeds which fringed the river bank.

The voices drew closer; he heard the rattle of oarlocks, and a grating sound as a boat was hauled up on the strand. Then, in a sudden rift of moonlight, he saw six dark figures come straggling up the bank, each bearing a load of some sort upon his back. The moon was hidden again now, but the landing party had no difficulty in striking the narrow pathway at once. Then, in absolute silence, single file, they strode past Willets' place of concealment, heading straight for the old mansion.

A thrill of exultation swept over the Secret Service man. Beyond all question of doubt, now, he was hot on the trail of Valoroso's gang. He felt that soon he would be in possession of information such as would enable him to bring down a raiding party, and that the hitherto successful reign of this swarthy king of counterfeiters would come to a speedy termination.

He arose stealthily, and started on down the pathway after the mysterious six; surely, they would lead him directly to the rendezvous of the main band. In the exhilaration of this belief, he suddenly recalled his young bride whom he left back in the East, eagerly and anxiously awaiting the outcome of his hazardous mission.

"I'm glad for Jean's sake!" he exclaimed to himself, as he hurried on thru the uncertain light. "She'll be mighty glad and proud to think I've succeeded where so many have failed."

The next moment, in making a sudden turn, he found himself but a few paces behind the others, and dropped hurriedly to the earth. One especially dilapidated wing of the mansion Willets had failed to visit in his recent exploring, and it was toward this part that he beheld the six making their way. Thru the ghost-like eucalyptus shelter around him, the night wind shrieked and moaned unceasingly, like complaining voices of souls tormented; and Willets, tho not a timorous sort, felt a shudder of dread as he lay there crouched against the soft mold. A moment longer he waited, then began creeping forward again toward the dim outline of the crumbling house of mystery beyond.

The six burdened figures skirted around that portion of the ruin thru which Willets had recently entered, and, reaching the back wing, disappeared as tho swallowed up in unfathomable darkness. With stealthy steps he followed on after them. He came to a wide veranda which extended the entire length of the back wing. Here he raised himself carefully to an erect position and looked over the banister. At the far corner a feeble light gleamed from beneath a door; he crept forward, and with his heart thumping violently, placed his ear down to the narrow opening. Within he heard the hum of voices and the muffled tread of feet. Success was his; he had found the Valoroso gang—and at work! He could gather evidence now and descend upon the counterfeiters. He arose hurriedly to depart, but had scarcely gained his feet when he felt something cold suddenly pressed against his temple; it was the muzzle of a revolver.

CHAPTER III.

RESISTANCE, for the moment, being out of the question, the Secret Service man raised his arms above his head in token of surrender; they were as quickly jerked down again, and pinioned behind his back. Then he felt himself being searched and disarmed, and was dragged unceremoniously within the casement. In the glare about him he beheld a dozen or more burly ruffians pressing close in an uproar of rage and astonishment.

Notwithstanding his sudden capture and the evident danger attending his predicament, Willets retained his presence of mind sufficiently to study his surroundings minutely. That it was a gang of counterfeiters there could now be no possible doubt; their tools and metal discs lay scattered about on every side; and by the methods they were employing in their work, he knew it to be the Valoroso gang, tho there was none amongst them he could signal out as the notorious leader. He noticed, too, that comparatively few of the gang were Mexicans; they seemed, rather, to be the scum of all nations.

From the sinister looks they gave him, he knew that his life was in peril; still, he reasoned that they would hardly act until the return of their leader. He determined upon a bold stroke; at least, he could scarcely make his condition more desperate. In response to the gruff demands on all sides for him to state his business, who he was, and what he meant by spying at the door, he assumed an air of easy insolence and replied calmly:

"I see you don't know me; but there isn't one here among you who hasn't heard of me. Men, I'm Ned Florence—king pin of 'em all!"

The ruffians surrounding him gave vent to a murmur of mingled astonishment and disdain; for the name spoken was that of a counterfeiter more skilful and renowned than even Valoroso himself. It was a daring game he played, but he looked calmly around the circle of evil faces with all the insolent arrogance he could assume as tho he considered them—each and every one—too far beneath him to notice.

Some of the gang seemed undecided; others were openly outspoken in their disbelief and scorn. An uproar of gruff demands arose: "Prove it!" "You're a spy—a sneakin' spy!" "We caught you spyin'——"

"And I tell you I came on a visit to your leader—not to be bothered by you yelping hounds! I'm Ned Florence —"

"Then prove it! If yer Ned Florence, ye've got to show us—an' be quick doin' it!"

Willets greeted their angry cries with scornful indifference; then, reaching into his pocket, he brought forth a shining peso, and with lofty contempt passed it over to the noisy crowd.

"You dogs say for me to prove my statements. Well, I will! Is there one among you who can make a peso equal to that one? Naw, there ain't, and there never will be. That's the genuine 'Ned Florence' brand, sabe?"

He glanced contemptuously at the crowd as they passed it from one to another in respectful admiration; already there seemed to be a change in their manner toward him. The coin was genuine—fresh from a Mexican mint; but Willets felt that his bluff was making good. He continued to play the part he had assumed as best he knew how. Picking up a handful of coins from a bench near by, he studied them with painstaking scrutiny; the result, apparently, was displeasing to him.

"Coarse—coarse work!" he exclaimed, shaking his head and walking on to another bench; here he picked up a number of new pesos. He assumed a patronizing air, as he exclaimed: "Now, this ain't so rotten; in fact, these ain't bad at all—for Valoroso!" He motioned the workmen to gather around him again, and added: "I say, these pesos you are turning out are very fair; some, really good; but, men, I leave it to you, man for man—and I want you to tell me just what you think about it: Is there one peso here equal to the Florence brand?"

The gang was forced to admit, tho with reluctance, the inferior quality of their own product compared with the workmanship and appearance of genuineness shown in the sample handed out by their visitor. Suspicion, for the most part, was dispelled; they hung eagerly upon every word uttered by this master workman.

"Now, men," resumed Willets, patronizingly, "while I say much of your goods is by no means bum work, still all of it can be improved on mightily; and it's this crude output that hurts us all alike! Am I right? Certainly—you know that as well as I do! Well, for this reason, I thought I'd pay you a little visit; you nabbed me just as I was doing a bit of reconnoitering—making sure I'd hit the right plant, see? I came to exchange ideas which may be helpful all around. Now, you know just who I am, and what I'm here for. If you'll kindly present me to your worthy leader, Senor Valoroso, I'd like to have a few words with him."

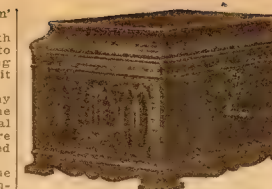
The crowd, won over by his easy confidence, had cast aside all manner of doubt and suspicion. The bluff of the

(Continued on Page 27.)

ACTRESS TELLS SECRET

A Well Known Actress Tells How She Darkened Her Gray Hair With a Simple Home Made Mixture.

Miss Blanche Rose, a well-known actress, who darkened her gray hair with a simple preparation which she mixed at home, in a recent interview at Chicago, Ill., made the following statement: "Any lady or gentleman can darken their gray hair and make it soft and glossy with this simple recipe, which they can mix at home. To a half pint of water add 1 oz. of bay rum, a small box of Barbo Compound, and ¼ oz. of glycerine. These ingredients can be bought at any drug store at very little cost. Apply to the hair twice a week until it becomes the required shade. This will make a gray haired person look 20 years younger. It makes the hair soft and glossy, is not sticky or greasy and does not rub off.



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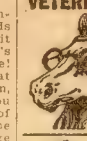

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WHAT WOMEN ARE DOING IN THE WAR

"A GROUP of women, all in uniform, was standing about some crude tables piled high with rolls, sandwiches and fruit, while nearby stood four huge canisters. The tracks were empty of trains, but there was an air of expectancy which indicated that we were none too soon. The platform was crowded with women of all sorts, all with an unmistakable air of purpose. Evidently getting out at 4 o'clock in the morning had not proved such an undertaking for them as I had assumed it would be for my wife."

(From the story on "How the Canteen Women Work," on this page.)

How the Canteen Women Work

ARTHUR TRAIN, in the Saturday Evening Post, gives a vivid description of a canteen section of women in New York serving the men of a passing troop train.

The characters are a man and wife of the wealthier class, who had been living in careless luxury before the war and who had cut off all unnecessary expenses about their home, because it had become fashionable to save. The wife had also engaged in war work, and had been called up in the night to serve in the canteen. The husband's story says:

WE MADE our way down to the lower level and looked about us. At the farther end a group of perhaps twenty women, all in uniform, were standing about some crude plank tables, piled high with rolls, sandwiches and fruit, while on two trucks stood four huge canisters. The tracks were empty of trains, but there was an air of expectance which indicated that we were none too soon.

"I must get assigned," said Helen, hurrying away.

The platform was crowded with women of every sort, from awkward young girls to motherly white-haired old ladies, all with an unmistakable air of purpose. Evidently getting out at 4 o'clock in the morning had not proved such an undertaking for them as I had assumed it would be for my wife. There were shop girls, scrub women, a couple of actresses, and twenty or thirty others who had no peculiarly distinguishing characteristics, and among whom—could I be seeing true?—was an elderly female, who strikingly resembled my friend, Mrs. Highbilt, in an old traveling suit. Shades of Fifth avenue! She signaled with a gloveless hand.

"What are you doing here, you mere man?" she crackled genially.

"Taking lessons from my better half," I admitted. "Honestly, Anna, I think this is about the greatest thing I've seen since I got back!" She seemed pleased.

"The women are all right," she said confidently—"all of them!"

The train was coming. Instantly the platform became a hive of activity as each woman rushed to her appointed position. The rumbling grew louder, the shriek of the brakes rising high above its diapason. Soon the train shot out of the shadows and ground slowly to a stop beside us. Simultaneously every window was pulled up, revealing sober, bronzed faces.

"It's the ——th Regulars," a musical voice shouted in my ear. "Mr. Stanton, do you mind handling those coffee urns?" It was Miss Pritchett (the captain).

"Anything! Anything for you!" I answered tremulously, as she shoved me coffeeward.

A couple of officers had descended from one of the platforms and were saluting our commander. I had a fleeting vision of Helen carefully pouring something from a steaming pitcher into a tiny cup, thrust by a hand from a neighboring window.

"Would you prefer to have the men in company formation?" asked one of the officers.

"Thanks—yes. It would be quicker," answered Miss Pritchett.

The Major ascended the platform and gave some short, sharp orders. There was a loud scuffling and in a moment the men came pouring out of the cars and formed in company front, facing the train. They were a fine-looking lot of fellows—those young patriots. And they held themselves erect, with a conscious pride in their uniforms that somehow took hold of me as nothing had for a long time. Strange how the uniform wipes out every difference of race or station!

The company slowly filed down to the end of the platform, where each man filled his cup at the coffee canister and received his sandwiches and fruit; then they filed back into the cars. The sandwiches had all vanished; so had the bananas. One of the coffee canisters had been overturned. They had made a clean sweep of everything in sight.

On the platform they had maintained a dignified silence; but once back in their seats they all began, as a matter of course, to sing. And how they sang! Their mellow voices floated out thru the car windows and thru the station until it echoed like some big dimly lighted cathedral to the antiphonies of a full choir. In the midst of "Carry Me Back to Old Virginny" a station hand came running along the platform, saying that the train was going to pull out, that they were eleven minutes behind time. From inside came the sound of a mouth organ and a chorus of "Where Do We Go From Here, Boys?"

"All aboard! All aboard!" shouted the train starter.

The young Major saluted Miss Pritchett again.

"Thanks a lot!" he said. "The men hadn't had anything to eat since 3 o'clock yesterday afternoon."

"Thank you for the concert!" she answered. "They're a fine regiment. Good luck to you!"

The song inside changed to a thundering chorus of "Onward, Christian Soldiers!" The train began to slide along the rails and the Major moved up on the lowest step of the car, seemingly loath to go.

"It's awfully good of you, you know," he added feelingly, "to take such a lot of trouble."

"Not a bit!" she answered. "It's not much. I wish it was more."

His eyes continued to linger upon her until an intervening pillar cut off his view. The whole episode had not taken more than twenty minutes. Oh, to be young! And to be going!

I was meditating upon the misfortunes of being old when I was ordered to superintend the refilling of the coffee urns.

An official now came down the iron steps from the gate.

"We have just had word that the next train, with fifteen hundred men from Yaphank, has been delayed two hours. It will get in about quarter past 6."

Miss Pritchett laughed and shrugged her shapely shoulders.

"You'll let us sleep in the waiting-room?" she asked.

"The station is yours," he answered gallantly.

"Come on, everybody!" she called. "Let's go up to the restaurant and get some coffee ourselves."

Up in the main station I noticed that our numbers had been augmented by ten or a dozen other women, some of whom I recognized as having last seen at Mrs. Highbilt's ball three years before—one the daughter of a banker and another the wife of a railroad president. But there were also several whose costumes indicated that they were far from being well-to-do.

Miss Pritchett and I pushed six of the small tables together, making one large one, and the party sat down indiscriminately.

"Helen was the last person in the world I could see doing this sort of thing," I said to Miss Pritchett, "so I took it for granted that you had got the wrong number."

"You're not the first husband who has been surprised in that way recently," she retorted. "Husbands seem to be a little incredulous. Maybe that's why they elected me chairman—because I'm unencumbered."

"You ought to round up a couple of thousand husbands and let them see what you're doing here. It's great!" said I warmly. "It might start the husbands doing something."

Miss Pritchett nodded.

"It's a pity more people don't know the response the women of the country have made," she said. "It's really very fine. I know that the men are giving their lives and their fortunes without a murmur; but numerically they aren't doing as much as the women. If you look around you the chances are that for every man you know here in New York who is really doing something for the war, you will find five times as many women doing just as much. The number of women, of every class, who have turned to and helped is quite marvelous; and it's growing bigger every day."

Brings the Story of a Heroic Woman Nurse

THE first news of a wonderful retreat of almost 10,000 Serbian troops thru Russia and Finland with a Scotch nurse—Dr. Elsie Ingles—at their head has been brought to this country by Miss Kathleen Burke, representative of the Scottish Women's Hospitals.

"To grasp the significance of this event in history one must recall the prelude," said Miss Burke. "This was the mighty rush by massed legions of Austrians and Germans upon poor Serbia. What could the defenders do but retreat? One little army, composed of 17,000 soldiers, fell back into Roumania. They had fought hard but hopelessly, and when finally reaching security behind the Russian lines the troops enjoyed a much-needed rest.

"The Russian government equipped and reorganized this force. A Russian general took command, mustering the men in two brigades. Then came some hard fighting. An appeal for medical aid was sent to London.

"The response by the British government was the instant dispatch of Dr. Ingles. The Russian unit of the Scottish Women's Hospitals, in direct charge of Dr. Ingles, was assigned to join the Serbians and minister to the sick and wounded.

"Dr. Ingles suspected the aims of the Russians down there. She sent her ultimatum. It was that she would take with her the Serbian troops if forced to leave their camp.

"The Russians were determined that she and her eight women nurses and others in the hospital unit should leave. They set a day for her departure from Jassy, Roumania, where the Serbians lay. Dr. Ingles told the Serbians, and with a cheer the 8,000 who remained said they would accompany her.

"Then began the march past the pickets, patrols and fortified camps of the Russian troops. It was a veritable retreat of the Ten Thousand. Onward thru Russia went the miniature army. God only knows how they obtained their food! Russia was filled with roving bands, undisciplined, robbing right and left, fighting, fraternizing and fighting again with one another. These Red with the Bolshevik battalions at the approach of the Serbians.

"It was a trying march, but the determination of Dr. Ingles kept the men moving. Into Finland they went finally, and to a certain port where British transports carried the tired warriors and their guides to England.

"It was only in November last when the Serbians arrived with Dr. Ingles at their camp near Newcastle. Dr. Ingles died the day after. Now, re-equipped and with a guardian angel always with them, these soldiers are just about arriving at Saloniki, ready to fight till the end for their beloved country and for the woman who saved them from the Russians."

Miss Kathleen Burke.

A Real Patriot.

CONSIDERABLE interest was manifested in trying to find out when a certain society woman, who has charge of a knitting Red Cross branch, goes to luncheon. Those who were at the branch at 12 or 1 or 2 o'clock found her hard at work. "Does she ever eat at all?" some one asked. Then it was discovered that she runs away for ten minutes to a lunch counter in the neighborhood and is back "on the job."

At Boarding Schools.

GIRLS at boarding schools are doing all kinds of work out of school hours for the Red Cross, and many of them have shown great executive ability in such work. Most of the schools are giving Red Cross courses, so that when the war is over the new generation of young women will be better prepared for the work of life than any who have ever before come out of the schools.

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How About That War Garden?

Whether you live in a mansion like that above and can spare your front lawn, or whether you have only a back yard, like the picture below, you ought to have a war garden. At least, so thought the Cleveland, Ohio, people who planted theirs last year and not only showed their patriotism but saved money as well.

MORE gardens will be planted this year than ever before. Last year's official cry for greater food-production has now become the expression of a universal need. On the other hand, is the warning of a probable shortage of seed. So—you gardeners-in-earnest—act quickly and for patriotic reasons, economically. The reckless enthusiasm of the beginner, in particular, should be curbed by patriotic discretion. Community gardening has been found a most satisfactory form of gardening. Neighbors, pooling their interests, can work under the expert advice of a seasoned gardener, with a consequent saving of seed, fertilizer and labor.

If you made your first garden last year, you doubtless have more seeds left over than you put in the ground. By all means use these now, testing them for vitality. The testing is easily done by putting a few seeds between pieces of blotting paper laid in a soup plate, another soup plate being inverted over it. Some seeds keep for a number of years, as follows: Beans, 3 years; beets, 6; cabbage, 5; carrot, 4; cauliflower, 5; celery, 8; cucumber, 10; eggplant, 3; endive, 10; leek, 3; lettuce, 5; sweet corn, 2; muskmelon, 5; onion, 2; parsley, 3; pea, 2; pumpkin, 4; radish, 5; spinach, 5; squash, 6; tomato, 4; turnip, 5; watermelon, 6.

Fertilizer and ammunition are made from the same materials. Hence there is likely to be trouble also in securing food for your soil, should it need enrichment. Nitrogen makes leaves and stems. It is needed for the growth of vegetables like lettuce, spinach and Swiss chard. Potash is a requisite for seed corn, potatoes and tomatoes, as it produces seed, fruit and roots. If last year your corn did not develop ears, the soil needs potash; if your beets were withered and your lettuce and cabbage shriveled, the soil lacks nitrogen. Of course, barnyard manure is the best possible fertilizer and there is no danger of getting too much on. A depth of three inches is a good supply. For a garden 50 by 50 feet two loads will be sufficient. It should be put on the ground as soon as possible, so that it may become well-rotted before the day of seed sowing.

To the amateur soil is just dirt and nothing more. The member of the gardeners' guild knows that his back yard is friable and loamy, or that it is stiff and clayey. Clayey soil, he knows, retards plant growth and becomes cloddy after rains. He works it into gardening condition by spading under sand or sifted ashes. Wood ash is excellent for soil; finely sifted coal ashes may be advantageously used, especially if the location is low and inclined to become water-logged after rains. It is an encouraging thought that the best soil is that which has been worked several years and manured each year.

The still frosty days of spring are a good occasion for looking over the tool chest. Even the smallest garden should have a wheel hoe in its tool outfit. The simplest type with several attachments costs only a few dollars. It is a machine that can be used more than all the other tools together. The double-wheel hoe has a distinct advantage over the single-wheel in that the rows can be straddled, permitting very close work while the plants are small and accordingly cutting down the back-breaking task of hand weeding. The wheel hoe with a seed-drill combination marks the row, opens the furrow, drops the seed, covers it, and rolls it and gets it straight in one operation as fast as the gardener can walk. With this tool the innocent beginner is more likely to find gardening the pleasant outdoor sport he anticipates. No tool, however, has ever been invented that completely does away with the hardest gardening job of all—hand weeding. Then there are the insects and blights to be fought. Some sort of spraying machine is a real necessity.

When seed-sowing time comes have the ground, previously spaded up, as smooth and fine as it is possible to make it with an iron rake, and always freshly prepared. Mark the rows out as straight as you can get them with your garden string, and don't be too lazy to make a new straight line as soon as the rows begin to get a little crooked; every crooked row means more work every time you work it thruout the summer.

Cultivation should begin before the plants get above ground. Millions of little weeds will have sprouted and be above the soil, tho hardly visible to the gardener's eye, as he rakes the surface very lightly to remove them. If the weeds are allowed once to get the start of the garden, the vision of thriving lettuce and juicy radishes will forever remain a vision.

Finally, no set of rules, however well memorized, will make a successful gardener.

If you plan to have a war garden this year the publisher of the Ledger has made arrangements whereby the seed will cost you nothing. In return for a year's subscription to the Ledger at $1.50 you can get, absolutely free, fourteen packets of choice garden seed of various kinds in sufficient quantities to plant a garden larger than is necessary to supply the needs of the average family. Address W. D. Boyce Co., 500 North Dearborn street, Chicago.

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PETE'S PUNCH—

Peter was filled with rightful ire,
This sign had turned his thoughts to fire
"I have a plan," he cried in glee,
"That meeting will never get to be"

Then to the chicken house he ran,
Intent on carrying out his plan
Inquiring fowls gazed on in awe,
They thought a crazy man they saw.

Pete grabbed an old hen off the nest,
Muttering, "Well, I'll fix that pest"
And into a box he piled with care
Eggs that for ages had been there

Then to the meeting fast he walked,
As to himself he gayly talked
When he was near the listening throng
He said, "I'll tell you it's all wrong."

Then Peter heard the speaker rave
And tell 'twas wrong our land to save
By joining in this fight at all,
We ought only to talk and stall.

Now Peter just couldn't stand that fu
With eggs and eggs he then did muss
The speaker and the crowd. Oh! say!
That meeting sure broke up that day!

Real Foresight.

"I am afraid you do not practice economy, my dear," complained Mr. Kjones

His wife cast a contemptuous glance at him. "Come with me to the attic," she commanded. And he followed her thither

In the attic she opened a trunk and took out a bundle wrapped carefully in tissue paper. Tearing off the wrappings, she disclosed a lovely, flimsy gown

"That," she said, "is my wedding dress."

"And do you call it economy to save your wedding dress?" he chortled. "That's not economy, it's sentimentality It would have been economy to wear that dress and get its worth out of it. But here it is no earthly good to you nor anybody else. Economy! Huh!"

"That's where you are wrong," she said, calmly. "I am saving that dress for my next wedding."

That held him for a while.

A Soft Job.

When a certain Australian contingent arrived in Egypt it was noticed that the discipline of the troops was rather slack. One day an Anzac passed an officer without saluting. The officer called him back

"Do you know who I am?" he asked

The Australian replied that he did not.

"Well, I'm an officer"

"Oh, you are?" was the reply. "Well, you've got a soft job, mate. You stick to it!"

Baby's Profession.

The young mother flew to the door when her hubby's step was heard.

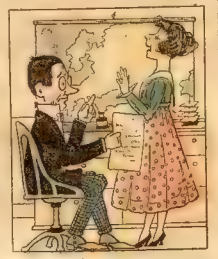
"Oh, Henry, my love, I've found out what our darling little boy is going to be. He will take up a profession; no trade for him! He'll be a doctor!"

"What nonsense," cried Henry. "How can you tell? The little chap's only 15 months!"

"Oh, I know!" gurgled the mother. "You should see how pleased he is when any one puts out their tongue!"

PRACTICAL.

Joy of life, my honey—
Life of sweet content;
Love is more than money,
But—money pays the rent!



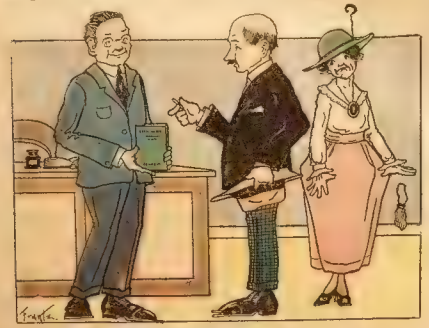
Manager—All these words are spelled wrong. Why don't you look them up?

Proud Steno—"Who, me? Why, I wouldn't even take the dictionary's word for anything."

His Sane Method.

"How is it that young Dr. Phalanxwin has succeeded in building up a large practice so quickly?"

"Oh, he tells his men patients that they work their brains far harder than their bodies, and his women patients that for some time they have kept up solely by their wills. Naturally, he cannot help but succeed."—Puck



Groom—"How much do I owe you?"
Justice of the Peace—"What do you think it's worth?"
Groom—"Here's a quarter! I've been married twice before!"

This Is Love.

It was the glorious spring, but it was dusty and the rude wind blew grit into their faces as the youth and the maid turned the corner.

"Sweetums," he cooed gently, drawing her close to his manly breast, "did you get any in your eyes?"

"Yes, my Jewel," she simpered, mopping her optic with a handkerchief, which she had extracted from some hiding place in her attire

"Ah! in which of your glorious orbs reflecting the light of heaven did that Hunnish piece of dust intrude?" he questioned fiercely

"My right," she said, and added, "Sweetheart, did you get any in your eyes?"

"Yes, my dove," he responded, while he mopped away at his eye with the same handkerchief which she had used.

"How sweet," she scrimmed, "and yours was in the right eye, too?"

"Yes, light of my life."

"Adolphus," she whispered rapturously, "do you think it could have been part of the same grain of dust?"

"I hope so!" he answered, fervently.

"Wouldn't it be lovely, honey?" she whispered

"Si'glorious," he breathed

Got It at Last.

The man in the drug store was perplexed. Try as he would, he could not remember what his wife had told him to get. Presently he brightened up. "Say, name over a few young people's societies."

"Christian Endeavor," began the druggist.

"No."

"Young People's Union?"

"No."

"Epworth League?"

"That's it! That's it! Give me 5 cents' worth of Epworth salts."

Judging by Appearances.

"Dat tree has been struck three times by lightnin', boss," said Sam

"Impossible, Sam. Lightning never strikes twice in the same place, you know."

"Well, say, boss, the thing what struck it yesterday bears a strikin' semblance to what struck it before."

Speaking of Religion.

Hilda—"Well, there's one thing I can say. I never made a cloak of my religion."

Bertha—"No, dear, there's not enough of it for that. Might be enough, perhaps, to make a pocket handkerchief."

How It Worked.

"Just one month ago Edith and I agreed that we would point out each other's faults without reserve."

"And you are still doing it."

"Oh, no; we haven't spoken to each other for twenty-nine days."

Girls Can't Keep Silent.

"What do you do with an unpopular teacher?"

"Give him the silence treatment," said the boy.

"I'm afraid that would hardly be practicable in a girls' school," said the damsel.

Nothing to Fuss About.

"I've been a model husband for six months."

"That's a fine record."

"And my poor wife finds life so dull she's about to die of ennui."

Her Aim Was Bad.

The lawyer had been consulted by a discouraged-looking man who professed to be in need of a divorce

"I don't see much chance for you," the lawyer said. "I hardly think you can get a separation from your wife on the ground of her throwing things at the dog."

"But," said the haggard-looking man, "every time she throws at the dog she hits me."

A Strange Complaint.

Railroad President—"Another farmer is suing us on account of his cows."

Lawyer—"Killed by our trains?"

Railroad President—"No; he complains that our passengers are leaning out of the windows and milking them as the train goes by."

Difficult.

Lady — "How do you manage to make such nice cakes in the absence of eggs?"

Cook—"Well, mum, you try to break four pigs."

Get Busy, Sol.

"What system of finance have you in your flat?"

"The solar system, just at present."

A Very Large Rat.

Some soldiers home on leave from the front were discussing the different things they had seen while in France and among them were the number and size of the rats they had been troubled with. Said one boy: "Talk about rats! Why, I've seen some as big as sucking pigs."

"That's nowt, spoke up another. "One night in my billet I woke up and there was one of them trying my coat on."

A Good Start.

"Well, this cook has the record."

"How so?"

"She broke something before she started in"

"What on earth was that?"

"Her promise to come."

Quite Fundamental.

He looked at his wrist watch

"Will you marry me?" he said She blushed

"There is really no time to lose. You see, I have only twenty-four hours' notice. I must report at headquarters tomorrow at 5. We sail for France in three days. Will you marry me?"

"I don't mind," she said. "Only—I should like to make one condition."

"And that is"

I have dreamed for years of getting married, but not in this way. But I will marry you if—when you return—you will propose to me all over again, and we can go on a honeymoon and I can be courted and—well, you know, I am sure"

"All right," he said, with a smile. "To be honest with you, dearest, I thought I was going to escape all that—but I see it is no use. I might have known better. Even a war like this cannot keep a woman from having her own way—especially about a wedding."—Life.

Disillusioned.

The cub reporter reported to the office. He was distrait, blue, broken in spirit

"What ails thee, child?" queried the kind-hearted city editor.

"It was my first assignment," explained the cub, "and I found out that another legend has gone glimmering. De Fault, the thieving bank cashier, never taught in Sunday school."

A Sportsmanlike Aversion.

"What do you think of this submarine warfare?"

"Well," replied Broncho Bob, "it seems all wrong to me. Dealing from the bottom of the deck is bad enough, but when it comes to pulling something from the bottom of the ocean, the game looks like it's pretty far gone to the bad."

Poor Sample of His Skill.

"Tell me what people read and I'll tell you what they are"

"Well, there's my wife. She's forever reading cookbooks. Now what is she?"

"A cook, of course."

"That's where the spokes rattle in your wheel, my boy. She only thinks she is."

Nothing Wasted.

"Our cars are pretty crowded," said the manager of a New York city line

"I'm"

"Our passengers are pretty hot."

"In that case," suggested the president of the outfit, "we won't have to heat the cars."

A Sure Way to Win.

"So you're going to propose to Mabel tonight?"

"Yes"

"Think she'll accept you?"

"Sure. I'm going to wear my new uniform for the first time. She'll fall for that sure"

His Reputation Saved.

Wife—"This paper says that a great store of buckwheat coal has been found in New Jersey. Why is it called buckwheat"

Hub—"Why—er—buckwheat is heating, you know, my dear"

Soft Words, but No Money.

Freshy—"Father's letters are full of good will and friendliness, but he won't send me a cent"

Chummy—"You're the object of his unremitting kindness, surely."

A PATRIOTIC GIRL.

Said the pretty girl
To her sweetheart: "Son,
For goodness' sake
Don't call me Hun."

"Enjoyed your birthday party, Jimmie?"

"You bet!"

"Well what little girls did you dance with?"

"Oh, I didn't dance. I had three fights downstairs with Tommy Jones an' I licked him every time."

Farmer and Son.

"Have you that story all ready about the boy who ran away from home and returns Christmas eve to pay the mortgage off the farm?" asked the editor

No," replied Mr. Penwiggle. "That story's out of date. I'm writing a story about real life in which the son gets down on his knees to persuade his father not to put any more mortgages on the farm in order to buy automobiles."

An Impudent Hobo.

The lady of the house shut her lips tightly when she saw who had rung the bell.

"No," she said, "you were here in January. I never give to a beggar twice. I know he is undeserving of help."

"I wouldn't have called, mum," said the tramp, seeing that he need expect nothing more from that house, "only I oped you might 've one of them little 'ome-made cakes left like you gave me a month ago. I want to enlist, but I'm just five pounds too light, and one of your little cakes would 'ave put me right."

Not Worried.

A party of engineers were out wiring cutting in "No Man's Land" one night. Things were progressing very favorably when one of our sentries sent up a flare or star shell so that he could spy out the land. Immediately all the wire cutters, except one, threw themselves down

"Keep still, you idiot!" they whispered to the foolhardy one

"It doesn't matter, you silly chumps," came the retort "It's one of ours!"

Deceitful Dress.

"Clever deduction is everything," declared Sherlock Holmes. "For instance, if you see a lady going out in a ball costume, it is safe to deduce that she is going to a ball."

"Not at all," objected Dr. Watson. "Many of our girls have adopted it for ordinary street wear."

Not the Way He Wanted It.

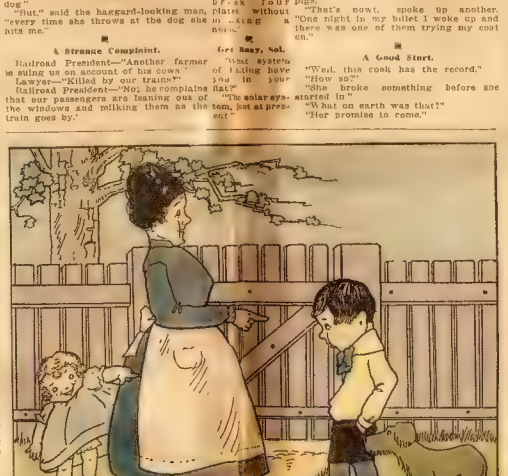
Jack—"You promised me a kiss if our team won"

Betty—"All right; but a first-class ball player like you wouldn't find any satisfaction in merely taking one. Stand off across the room and I'll throw you one"

He Had Warning.

Lady—"I'm afraid you don't like work my good man"

Tramp—"How kin I, lady, seein' it killed me pore wife!"



Mother—"You're very naughty today, Jimmie!"
Johnnie—"Well, you got somethin' to be thankful for"
Mother—"What's that?"
Johnnie—"That I ain't twins."

NOT A LOVE EPISODE.

He gazed into her lovely eyes
With some concern.
A love affair, so you surmise
Read on, and learn

He gazed away, but not with bliss
We heard him wheeze.
"You have astigmatism, miss
Five dollars, please."

Sensitive Suspicion.

"You don't seem pleased when I suggest that you have a lovely disposition."

"I'm not," replied Miss Cayenne. "Telling a girl she has a lovely disposition is usually a sort of apology for not being able to say she is either good-looking or interesting."

Trouble.

"[illegible] Biggins [illegible] for [illegible]
[illegible] The [illegible] is that he don't limit [illegible] to his [illegible] ing sta[illegible] on going to [illegible] gets."

Worth It.

"Did you lend [illegible] money?"

"I don't get rid of [illegible] friendship [illegible] badly."

WORTH SHOWING.

The Daphne knits for soldiers
Who fight in foreign lands,
The fair coquette does not forget
She has two lovely hands.

And many do admire them
With ill-concealed delight,
While Daphne flits about and knits
At morning, noon and night

Feminine Strategy.

"Here's an article on the sporting page about ring tactics."

"What is meant by ring tactics?"

"Have you never observed how a designing young woman can inveigle an unsuspecting young man into buying her one?"

The Mistress (indignantly)—"Just whatever did you mean by wearing my low-necked evening dress at the bus-drivers' ball last night? Really, you ought to have been ashamed of yourself!"

Jane (meekly)—"I was, plumb You never heard such remarks as they made."

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GENTLE JABS.

Little white lies live long and prosper.

Love is the only sure cure for coquetry.

The more a man knows the less he boasts.

With some 5-cent cigars you get at least 6 scents.

All love isn't blind; some of it is merely nearsighted.

Failure is the only thing a man can achieve without effort.

Disappointment is the saucer belonging to the cup of sorrow.

Let's not be overanxious to grasp an opportunity that is too hot.

A wise man always pretends to take the advice his wife hands him.

If there were no fools in the world wisdom would be at a discount.

The house of a tidy woman and a motion to adjourn are always in order.

You can't discourage the prohibition movement by throwing cold water on it.

He's a wise fool who can induce the world to laugh with him instead of at him.

If men's faults were written on their foreheads they would never remove their hats.

Fame is but a bubble. The laurel wreath is less strenuous than a barrel hoop.

Once there was a woman who thought large feet preferable to a small understanding.

Where one man has been ruined by his enemies, hundreds have been ruined by their friends.

Don't judge a man by his size. The biggest fiddle in the orchestra plays the fewest notes.

Many a self-made man would probably turn out a different kind of job if given another trial.

Sometimes it is what we don't know about people that causes us to have a good opinion of them.

Never bit a man when he is down. Hit him when he is up a tree, then run away before he can get down.

A nice thing about being a millionaire is the anxiety of all the merchants to sell you goods on credit.

If a man agrees with a woman she thinks he is a fool. If he doesn't she considers him stubborn.

A man always admires another who says the right thing in the right place—especially if he be thirsty.

When one woman out of a hundred has nothing to say the other ninety-nine are asking what is the matter with her.

If sometimes happens that the man who has a wife and an automobile has two unmanageable things on his hands at once.

Are You Learning Thrift?

Saved $21,000 in 15 Years.

IF ANY one had told me fifteen years ago that I would be writing a letter today telling how I had saved over $21,000 out of a moderate salary, I should have told him, at least, that he was suffering from the heat and more likely would have said something sarcastic and more seriously reflecting upon his mental condition.

Even now, after having been thru the experience, it seems to me at times hardly possible; but the figures tell no lies, for they total quite a little above $20,000 now and my salary during all that time has been from $15 to $44 a week.

It was on a day in March, 1902, with twenty years of poverty behind me as an experience and after having had adventures in many financial schemes and so-called investments and always broke that I landed in a bank. That day I picked up a card I found lying on a counter. The card said that if a person saved $30 a month for thirty years and put it in the savings department at 3 per cent interest, he would have $17,467.70!

I looked at the men at their desks and my first thought was that whoever figured out and submitted such a financial scheme was certainly an originator of impossibilities! So long a time—thirty years. So much money—$17,467.70! Such a system could never answer! How could any one working on a salary ever save so much money when what he earned must go for food, clothing, shelter, sickness and to help others as well? No, such a scheme would never do, and especially for me, for I could see nothing ahead except impossibilities on a large scale.

But on second thought it occurred to me: "Maybe I will be around somewhere thirty years from now and if I put away a stipulated amount periodically, say, every two weeks, I will at least have something, even if I don't get a fortune of $17,487.70 as depicted on that card," and I decided then and there to hold onto the money I worked for, to save it persistently and consistently and to put what I saved where the separator would not be working overtime.

So I stepped up to the window and I opened a savings account with a silver dollar that looked as big to me as a wagon wheel. At last I had made the right kind of a start!

Then I began to make my deposits regularly every two weeks, just as I had planned. Sometimes I put in an extra dollar; sometimes two. Usually I would run short before my next pay day, very short, and was consistently uncomfortable, it seemed, 100 per cent of the time.

But I stuck it out and a few years savings, plus those extra dollars, certainly counted. My first thousand dollars looked like a million!

The next thing was to make my money earn more than 3 per cent and to find the best security. It seemed to me that land was about the only thing that couldn't blow away, burn up or disappear in the night. Then I went to the bank for information and learned of farm mortgages that would bring me 4½ per cent. To a sailor who has been shipwrecked and stranded at one time on a rocky shore, those securities looked mighty safe and sound. They looked so then and they look so now. I became an investor in farm mortgages.

As my savings and 3 per cent interest accumulated and as I collected the interest on my farm mortgages, I was able to buy more and more securities as the years rolled by. Today I have more than $21,000—quite a little more than that "impossible fortune of $17,467.70"—and it has only taken me about half as long to accumulate it as that little card said it would take.

But don't think that this $21,000 was all saved out of my wages! I found out by actual and personal experience that interest compounded and reinvested at 4½ per cent, 5 per cent, 5½ per cent is certainly a booster in the savings business.—From a letter received by a Chicago bank.

How Much Do You Save?

WOMEN are good earners. No one disputes that nowadays. But are women good savers? How much, for instance, do you put away in the cracked blue teapot on the mantlepiece? Enough to provide food, shelter, clothes and an occasional movie if the old pay envelope stopped?

Have you ever figured out with a pencil stub on the back of an ancient millinery bill just how much money it takes to create enough income to live on? And how much do you think you could live on at the age of 60? Would $75 a month do? Do you realize it takes $20,000 capital to yield with safety an income of $75 a month? How many women manage to save a thousand dollars a year for twenty years?

I ask these unpleasant questions, says Zoe Beakley in the New York Mail, because recently I stumbled upon the following statement: "Ninety per cent of the women over 60 in this country end their days dependent upon relatives and friends." And it startled me.

For confirmation of this amazing statement I hurried to a life insurance woman, Marie Virginia Smith, who is among the one hundred women agents in the entire country who wrote $100,000 worth of policies last year.

"I find," says Miss Smith, "that American women are poor savers. They earn largely. They spend generously. Generally speaking, they do not look into the future. If they think at all about providing for their old age, they think in lump sums, not in terms of a monthly or weekly income.

"In other words, if a woman has contrived to save $5,000 or so, she feels well fixed and satisfied with her efforts. She doesn't realize that her capital must be put to work and not be touched in order to yield her an income. Six per cent is the highest safe interest she can expect. And what is $300 a year to live on!

"So she spends the capital. It last: four or five years! Investigations and statistics show that a large percentage of women who have inherited lump sums from $50,000 to one million dollars have actually been in want in a few years! Even if a woman is paid annually $2,000 or $3,000, she is usually short of money before the end of the year.

"The only safe way for the average woman to prosper is to have a fixed income by the month or week."

Now, then, how is she to get it? Many a woman who has awaited the demise of a rich relative has learned that "there's many a slip." Many a fair one who has counted on marriage for her old age insurance has lived to repent in poverty.

Marie Virginia Smith can tell you how to do it. Miss Smith is in no sense an aid or abettor of the widely known Get-Rich-Quick Wallingford. Nor is she agent for the famous Aladdin lamp. But she shows that a woman of 35 by depositing $232 a year is guaranteed an income of $75 a month at the age of 60 for as long as she lives thereafter. If the woman happens to be 40 instead of 35, she must set aside $469 from her yearly earnings.

"If this seems a good deal," explains Marie Virginia, "remember that the woman of 35 to 40 is usually earning a fairly large salary. If her income is above $2,000 a year she will be able to manage that amount with comparative ease unless she is weighted with dependents.

"Even the girl earning $15 a week can by saving fourteen or sixteen cents a day secure her future against want or the humiliating necessity of living upon someone else's generosity during the years that should be full of rest and peace."

A Joke On the Joker

IRVIN S. COBB is a practical joker. One winter when in California delivering his lecture upon the war, it pleased Cobb to practice a bit upon his friend, Charles E. Van Loan, author of "Buck Parvin and the Movies." Cobb had asked Van Loan to introduce him to his Los Angeles audience and Van Loan had refused, being a reasonably modest man with a poor stage presence and a bad speaking voice. On the night of the lecture Cobb walked out upon the stage alone, spied Van Loan in a box and proceeded to flay him alive in an introductory speech.

At the end of his lecture it was Cobb's custom to answer questions, but when he thought the people had had enough for their money he would place his hand on his forehead, which would be the signal for his manager, in the rear of the house, to ask him the "planted" question: "Are you going back?" This was the cue for a neat retort from the lecturer, followed by a story apropos of the question, and on the laughter and applause thus obtained Cobb would make a graceful exit.

After the Los Angeles lecture, Cobb filled an appointment in a nearby city and Van Loan, still smarting from his public humiliation at Cobb's hands, went along for company.

The manager could not be present, and in the emergency Cobb planted the closing question with Van Loan, rehearsing him several times.

"When I put my hand up, so, you ask me, 'Are you going back?' Just that way, remember, because the wording of the question is important—'Are you going back?' And speak up loud."

The lecture was a great success, and at its close the questions came thick and fast. Finally there was a lull and Cobb put his hand to his forehead and waited to make his snappy retort, but this was what came floating up from the back of the house:

"Where do you go from here?"

Thoroly Done.

"His wife married him to reform him."

"Yep. And now his daughters have come home from college and taken up the job where their mother left off."

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On Black Hawk's Trail

By Harriet Wheeler

The Story in Brief

SAU-KE-NUK, the chief city of the Sauk, or Sac, Indians, nestles in the angle formed by the junction of the Rock River with the Mississippi. Near it is the high bluff, known ever as Black Hawk's Watch Tower. Here in June, 1831, the Indians are celebrating the Crane Dance, the time of wife-choosing. Two lovers, White Eagle and Raven Hair, recount some of the strange, superstitious stories that cling about the tower. The next day General Gaines, with a guard of soldiers, arrives, bringing a message from the President of the United States—an order for the Sacs to leave their lands and go into Iowa, claiming that the land occupied by Black Hawk and his people had been ceded to the United States Government in 1804. Black Hawk claimed the sale had been fraudulent, that he had never signed the treaty. Chief Keokuk urges Black Hawk to obey, and Black Hawk consents under protest. Five hundred canoes carry the people of Sau-ke-nuk to the western shore. Nearly a year later the story opens in New Salem, a village of log houses on the banks of the Sangamon River, in Illinois. Young Abraham Lincoln is clerking in the one store. He is chosen as a candidate for the Legislature. A messenger announces that a band of Sac Indians and other hostile tribes, led by Black Hawk, has invaded the State. Lincoln is elected Captain of militia and proceeds to the war. The troops gather at Beardstown, Ill. With some friendly Winnebago chiefs Colonel Gratiot goes with a flag of truce to meet Black Hawk and his followers. The truce fails, but Colonel Gratiot and his aids escape to Fort Armstrong, on Rock Island. Lincoln wins a wrestling championship. The militia arrives at Fort Armstrong and marches after Black Hawk, who sends back a flag of truce. Drunken militiamen attack the flag bearers. Black Hawk, angered, attacks the whites and defeats them. Lincoln meets Jefferson Davis at camp. Captain Horn witnesses a terrible massacre of whites at Indian Creek. The Indians carry away Sylvia and Rachel Hall, sisters. A new regiment is formed to chase Black Hawk, reported to have crossed into Wisconsin. Lincoln joins as a private. Captain Horn and companions ride on the trail of the Indians who hold the sisters. The girls are returned for a reward of $2,000 and sail for St. Louis. Captain Horn rejoins his command. Colonel Dodge's soldiers wipe out a band of Indians at the Pecatonica River. Indians attack the Apple River Fort. Black Hawk's Indians are routed at Kellogg's Grove and the Army pursues and finally gets on the trail.

Of course you are interested and, having read the above, you can go right ahead with the installment printed in this issue. Back copies, with the earlier chapters, may be obtained from our agents, news dealers, or by mail direct from the office of publication. This story started in No. 6, dated Feb. 9.

"He Has Anchored Off the Islands and Has Sent the Savages a Salute From His Six-pounder."

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CHAPTER XVIII.

BATTLE OF WISCONSIN HEIGHTS.

"PAUQUETTE!" called General Henry.

"Here, sir!" replied the scout, turning to the General.

"Are you and White Pawnee certain of the direction of the Hawk's trail?"

"It's straight as an arrow to the four lakes, sir!"

"And can we follow it?"

"We can. The Hawk purposely struck his trail thru swamps and sink-holes, planning thus to weary and delay the Army. It is a hard journey, but the men can make it in better shape than Black Hawk's starving band. They are about two hours ahead of us."

"We trust our luck in your hands," cautioned General Henry. "Lead on with the scouts."

Pauquette galloped to the front, reining his horse beside that of White Pawnee.

"Courage, lads," called Pauquette, "and follow Black Hawk's trail to victory."

The scouts' restless horses leaped onward along the trail, and the excited Army followed with wild cheers, the footmen running until nearly exhausted in their eagerness to keep pace with the mounted militia.

Over creeks, thru groves, underbrush and forests the scouts led them and the noon hour brought them to a series of mud-holes and swamps, swollen by the recent rains to good-sized streams.

"It's grub time," growled one of the men.

"Time is too precious to squander on eating, with Black Hawk just ahead," said General Henry. "Here!" he urged, springing from his horse. "Climb up on my saddle and let me trudge a while." And taking the astonished man by the arm, General Henry helped him to mount.

"Come on, boys!" he called cheerily. "Let us make this swamp in a hurry."

The grumbling ceased and the men plunged after their enthusiastic leader, wading to their armpits in many places.

"Hear that thunder, Horn?" asked Colonel Dodge.

"I do!" rejoined the young Captain. "Here comes the rain!"

"'It's water, water everywhere,
And not a drop to drink,'"

sang out General Henry. "We have not had a drop of drinking water since leaving Rock River at sunrise."

"We shall have an oversupply at this rate," responded Colonel Dodge.

But in spite of the heavy downpour, the intrepid General led his faithful followers until night registered the journey as a fifty-mile tramp.

They made their bivouac in a thicket of oaks and underbrush near a small creek, and the thirsty men drank to their fill.

"I'm chilled to the bone," declared Captain Horn. "What are our chances for a fire?"

"No fire tonight, Captain," called Satterlee Clark. "It is impossible to make this drenched stuff light. But the cook has some raw meat and is mixing a dough of flour and water."

"I am hungry enough to eat chips," exclaimed Bill Greene, "so pass the dough along."

The famished men devoured their cold rations, huddled together on the wet ground, and slept the sleep of the exhausted.

The storm ceased with the dawn. The crimson horizon heralded a clear day. Before breakfast ended White Pawnee appeared, leading a tottering Sac Indian. The men sprang to their arms shouting, "Indians! Indians!"

"Where from, White Pawnee?" questioned General Henry, advancing to meet them.

"Sac Indian, old and starving," replied the scout. "I found him along the side of Black Hawk's trail. He tells us that Black Hawk camped two miles ahead."

"Good news, White Pawnee!" ejaculated General Henry. "We will form into the order of battle at once. Dodge and Ewing's spy battalion to the front to lead on the fight, Fry to the right, Jones to the left, and Collins to the center. Forward, march! On Black Hawk's trail!"

"On Black Hawk's trail!" rang thru the forests as the little Army galloped madly westward toward the four lakes.

"We will be done with the Hawk's band of tottering skeletons within two hours," ejaculated Bill Greene. "What do you say, Horn?"

"First sight the Hawk, Bill," advised the Captain.

"But see what a plight the poor devils are in," argued Bill. "Their clothes are dropping off from them; the trail is strewn with bits of clothing and moccasins and camping utensils all along the road. Death will be a mercy to them."

"I admit all that, Bill; but remember they are Indians and will fight with their last breath."

Westward they marched, eager, expectant, unmindful of the noon hour, passing now and then an enemy's horse, dying beside the trail exhausted and starving.

The westering sun, lingering on the hilltops skirting Lake Mendota, beheld this wild Army of haggard, desperate troopers swinging into camp along the shores of Lake Monona. The soldiers knelt on the sandy beach and slaked their thirst with the cold crystal water. How enchanting! The most beautiful bodies of water that I have ever seen!" exclaimed General Henry. "What is the circumference, Pauquette?"

"Ten miles, monsieur, and further to the west the Mendota measures twenty miles in circumference, with heavy timber growing down to the very water's edge."

"What a waste of resources!" exclaimed Captain Wakefield. "If these lakes were anywhere else, except in the country they are, they would be considered among the wonders of the world. But this region is not for any civilized people to inhabit. The Almighty evidently intended it for the forest children and wild beasts."

He little guessed that in time this region would be occupied by Madison, Wisconsin's capital.

"We civilized Americans will inhabit this region tonight," laughed Captain Horn. "What are you talking about, Wakefield?"

"And all hands to the knoll to the north," commanded General Henry. "The camp cook is evidently preparing mess."

Up the sloping hill to the forest-crowned plateau, stretching a quarter of a mile back from Lake Monona, the Army hastened and stretched their numbed arms over blazing fires.

"Captain Wakefield," called General Henry, "it is your turn to provide water for the Army, and mess is waiting."

"Come on, Bill and Jake," urged the Captain, hurrying down the slope with a tin pail dangling from either arm.

"By George!" exclaimed Colonel Dodge, as they gathered at mess, "doesn't the coffee smell good after our one hundred miles' tramp without warm food or fire?"

"We certainly will appreciate the comforts of this night's camp," returned General Henry. "How black the night looks in the surrounding forests!"

Beyond the glow of the fire the towering forest encompassed the camp like an impenetrable black mist; no ray of light pierced the thickly tangled underbrush. Thru the openings along the slope leading to the lake the sandy beach gleamed white, and the regular roll of the waves along the shore chanted nature's evening lullaby.

The men ate their rations quietly, listening to this serenade; near by the owl's weird cry and far away the wolf's sharp bark flashed a challenge to the screaming wild cat. Suddenly, above the call of the wild, a musket shot pierced the night air, and Captain Wakefield's voice startled the camp by shouting:

"Under the fore legs, Bill! For God's sake, knife him under his arms!"

The men sprang to their feet and turned to the slope as Jake and Bill appeared, dragging a huge bear between them, with Captain Wakefield limping behind.

"What is up, Captain?" questioned General Henry, grasping Wakefield's arm. "Are you hurt?"

"A scratch or two and tattered and torn clothes."

"Where did you encounter that bear?"

"The beast sprang from the thicket upon my back as we came up the slope. He gripped me with such a ferocious hug that I was powerless. Bill dashed a pail of water over him and Jake fired his musket shot into him, and a thrust from Bill's knife loosened his hold so that I shook him to the ground. Uh! Don't talk to me about the enchanting loveliness of this region! Civilization will never harbor here!"

"Don't growl, Wakefield!" cut in Colonel Dodge. "We gain a breakfast of bear's meat out of this deal."

"See here!" exclaimed General Henry, as they halted beside the campfire. "That bear's hug clawed thru to your shoulder! Your clothes are torn and bloody, too."

"Never mind, I'm a hungry man!" And seating himself beside the fire, Captain Wakefield devoured the food served him, regardless of his condition.

When his appetite was appeased, Dr. Philleo dressed his shoulder, which proved to have only a scratch or two, as the Captain had said. After supper the fires were replenished for the night and the weary men slept between these two protections.

The morning sun accompanied them as they marched along the shores of Lake Mendota, piercing the dense forests and thickets of underbrush, which the Sphinx, who holds the keys of the future, failed to reveal to the harassed Army as the site-to-be of Wisconsin's peerless capitol and university grounds.

"The mats, kettles and bits of clothing strewn along the trail show that the Hawk's band realized their desperate condition," said General Henry, as he galloped alongside Colonel Dodge.

"No question about their desperation," replied Colonel Dodge, "or their destination, either. We passed the remains of a horse smoking in the coals, which shows to what resorts their hunger has brought them."

"Yes," said Captain Horn, "their starving horses are falling by the wayside. I

have counted three this morning. What is that firing ahead of us, Dodge?"

"The scouts are onto something," replied the Colonel. "What is it, Major Ewing?"

"Two starving Sauk Indians who fell behind the Hawk's band," replied the Major.

"Any news of the trail ahead?"

"Yes, the Hawk is rushing due northwest, headed for the Wisconsin River. His horses are falling by the wayside and his people actually staggering along the trail from exhaustion and hunger. They cannot be more than three miles ahead. Speed on, boys!"

"What luck!" grumbled Bill Greene, as the others dashed by him. "My horse has succumbed."

"Here, take mine," urged Captain Horn, "and let me run a while."

The gallant Captain swung Bill into his saddle before he could offer any objections, and sped on afoot, throwing away his camp kettle and extra clothing and urging the men to do the same. Forty horses fell and were abandoned by their flying comrades without a thought of food at the noon hour.

"Is that thunder muttering, Captain Horn?" cried Captain Wakefield as they panted up the ascending prairie rolling toward the bluffs, near the Wisconsin River.

"It is, Wakefield, and it is sprinkling now. Here come Pauquette and White Pawnee, and Ewing's spy battalion are yelling like mad."

"What is up, boys?" called General Henry, as Pauquette and White Pawnee dashed toward them, their horses flecked with foam.

"The spy battalion has overtaken Neapope, Black Hawk's commander-in-chief, and twenty braves. They are running thru the thick timber acting as rear guard to the Hawk's main band, who are just ahead trying to make the Wisconsin River."

"Tell Ewing to press on!" shouted General Henry to Pauquette. "We are coming!" The scouts wheeled and dashed on into the thicket concealing the enemy.

"Boys," called General Henry, "a mile and a half to the northwest rolls the Wisconsin. Every tenth man dismount and hold the horses, while the rest of us advance on foot to assist the spy battalion. We must cut thru Neapope's guard and capture the Hawk's band before they enter the river. Colonel Jones to the right, Colonel Collins to the left, Henry in reserve, Dodge to the extreme right, and lead on the charge. Forward, march!"

The little Army quickly formed into columns as directed, and charged forward yelling like madmen. Neapope faced his guard about and returned the cry with savage war whoops.

"The rain has soaked our muskets!" called Captain Horn.

"Never mind!" shouted Colonel Dodge. "Come on! Charge with the bayonets, boys!"

And leading forward, the fearless Colonel forced the enemy up the hill.

"There is Black Hawk," called General Henry, "mounted on his white pony, further over on that high bluff! He is addressing his braves!"

"We are compelled to fight or sacrifice our wives and children to the fury of the whites!" yelled Black Hawk, in the Winnebago tongue. "Stand your ground, my braves, and never yield to the enemy!"

On and on pressed the redoubtable Colonel Dodge, forcing the enemy to the top of the hill before they could form in line and make a stand.

"See!" exclaimed Captain Horn. "The women and children are down in the lowlands, making their way to the river under cover of the tall grass and willows fringing the banks! Some of them are already in the river headed toward the islands!"

"Never mind the women and children!" commanded General Henry. "Pursue the braves over the hill to the ravine below!"

Down into the ravine below dashed horsemen and footmen, Indians and whites, while the woods rang with their frantic shouts and war whoops, exchanging rapid fire in spite of the drizzling rain and lowering night.

"Black Hawk has abandoned his wounded horse!" exclaimed Captain Wakefield.

"And he is urging his men to follow him into the high grass bordering the river," called Colonel Dodge.

"Stop operations at once, Dodge," commanded General Henry. "Further pursuit into the marshes is impossible. With black night settling upon us. We will spend the night in this field."

The men huddled together upon the side of the prairie, lying on their arms with the rain steadily drizzling upon them, toward morning a sonorous voice sounded from the hill above them. They sprang to their feet in a panic.

"It is Black Hawk and his warriors challenging us to combat!" shouted several voices.

"They have us well trapped in this ravine," retorted others.

"Be quiet, boys!" commanded General Henry. "We can repulse the Indians as we did yesterday afternoon. Where are Pauquette and his Winnebago guides? They can interpret the speaker's message."

"Pauquette and his companions deserted camp last evening," said Captain Wakefield. "They are well on their way to Fort Winnebago."

"Cowards!" ejaculated General Henry. "Black Hawk is the speaker and his pleading tones indicate that he is begging for some compromise; but without an interpreter we can do nothing. We must wait for the morning light to shape our course."

As day dawned Major Ewing approached General Henry. "Ill luck again, General!" exclaimed he. "The scouts report Black Hawk and his band are across the Wisconsin River. But the trails are so crossed that they cannot determine their course."

"And our stock of provisions has fallen short, so that we cannot pursue them until we find Atkinson," commented General Henry. "What shall we do, Dodge?"

"Fall back to the Blue Mounds. Atkinson may have reached that point."

"Captain Horn," said General Henry, "will you select a companion and hasten to Blue Mounds as express to notify them of our coming?"

"Aye, aye, sir! What do you say, Bill Greene?"

"I'm your man, Captain."

Half an hour later the express riders struck the south trail leading to Blue Mounds. Early in the afternoon they sighted Mounds Fort, and as they approached the sound of military music greeted them.

"It's Atkinson arriving with the regulars, Bill!" ejaculated Captain Horn. "Together, now, with the Army call."

The appeal was answered, followed by the sound of horses galloping thru the underbrush bordering the trail. A minute later Elijah Kilbourn dashed into view, followed by Jefferson Davis and John Dixon.

"Well, well, boys!" exclaimed the veteran John Dixon. "What fresh lark are you engineering?"

"We are express, John," returned Captain Horn, "come to announce a victorious battle with Black Hawk's band at Wisconsin Heights."

"What sort of a fight did the Hawk put up?"

"Black Hawk exhibited as skilful a bit of military tactics as can be found in the annals of military history. Assisted by Neapope and fifty of his warriors, the Hawk held the pass leading to the Wisconsin Heights until the main portion of his army and the women and children were safely ambushed in the willow-fringed islands of the Wisconsin. Finally our redoubtable Dodge led our forces in a victorious charge which pressed the Indians over the bluffs into the tall swamp bordering the Wisconsin."

"And have you captured the Hawk?" eagerly questioned Jefferson Davis, as they approached Blue Mound Fort.

"No; aided by the rain and the black night, the Hawk escaped beyond the Wisconsin and mixed his trails so skilfully that we cannot determine the direction of his flight. Our supply of rations is exhausted, so that immediate pursuit is impossible. The Army will soon arrive to receive General Atkinson's command."

"Any killed?" questioned Elijah.

"Yes, Private Thomas J. Short. The Indians lost sixty-eight and the wounded reached into the hundreds. Over half of their number have succumbed from starvation, and the Hawk's band are a pitiful set of staggering skeletons. Any mail or news from Illinois?"

"No letters," replied John Dixon, "but an express rider reports the arrival of General Scott at Rock Island. The General has turned a portion of Fort Armstrong into a hospital for his cholera-stricken men. Half of his company have already succumbed to the disease."

"There is the fort's commander, Beauchard," exclaimed Captain Horn. "I must pay my respects to him while the rest of you report particulars to General Atkinson."

Mr. Beauchard advanced with outstretched hands to welcome the young Captain. "Have you come to succor captive maidens?" he asked.

"No, I come to announce the approach of our Army and to beg a drink of water."

"The fort well is at your service. Come in, my boy, when you are satisfied. Madam Beauchard is overjoyed at your coming."

"I am a little stiff, Beauchard, and will stroll about the grounds. Later I will thank Madam Beauchard for her hospitable solicitude."

Again and again the Captain filled the cup at the well, and after his thirst was quenched set off on the path leading around to the rear of the stockade, to the sent in the oak grove where Sylvia and he had sat and laughed and chatted on that glorious morning after their arrival at the fort. The Captain sat with his arms folded and head bowed on his breast, recalling the words, expression and movements of the girl. So absorbed was he with this glorified vision that time passed unheeded. The reverie was broken by a vigorous slap across his back and Colonel Dodge exclaimed:

"I have searched the fort for you, Horn. Don't you know that we have arrived and Atkinson has ordered us to march to Helena, where we cross the Mississippi in search of Black Hawk's trail. Come along to mess. What is up, old boy? Is it Sylvia?"

CHAPTER NINE.

THE FINAL STAND.

"IS THERE a settlement at Helena?" questioned Captain Horn of Robert Anderson, as they rode forward with the spy battalion.

"No, the shot tower standing on yonder hill gave employment to some half a dozen families who occupy the log cabins overlooking the Wisconsin. The families fled to Galena at the commencement of this outbreak. General Atkinson sent Colonel Marsh and his

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company to construct rafts out of the logs for the transportation of our forces."

"What do our forces number altogether?"

"Thirteen hundred able-bodied men," answered Captain Horn. "General Atkinson will discharge the ailing members, but Black Hawk's band counts about half of our number, and are staggering skeletons at the best."

They halted at the banks of the Wisconsin and all hands assisted with the building of the rafts. Early on the following morning began the transportation of the baggage. At noon the entire force was safely landed, and Elijah Kilbourn, heading the band of scouts, dashed up to General Atkinson.

"General," he began, "we have struck the Hawk's trail some four miles to the left, heading northwest toward the Mississippi."

"Hallelujah!" ejaculated General Atkinson. "Forward, march! On Black Hawk's trail!"

"That was a fortunate discovery, Elijah," remarked Captain Horn to the scout, as he galloped along between the Captain and Lieutenant Anderson.

"Indeed it was!" rejoined Elijah. "Not a man in the Army has the slightest conception of our whereabouts. This region, lying beyond the Wisconsin, is as much of an enigma as the heart of Africa."

"Are you sure of the trail, Elijah?" questioned Lieutenant Anderson.

"Judge for yourself, sir. Here it is. You perceive that the Hawk led his band in three parallel columns, and over these dry prairies the route is worn from two to six inches in the earth."

"Ah, so it is!" assented Lieutenant Anderson. "Poor wretches! They just dragged their feet along, apparently, too weary to lift them from the ground."

"We'll see enough of their misery to sicken every one of us," said Elijah.

"We leave the prairie this side of the creek."

"The hardest journey," panted Jefferson Davis, catching up with the scouts after they had forded the creek.

"Indeed so, Davis!" agreed Captain Horn. "This is the thickest forest we have attempted to pierce and the bald bluffs ahead seem well-nigh perpendicular. I believe that Black Hawk chose this route on purpose to discourage us."

"Of course he did," said Elijah, "but we are making two days' march to their one. See these two poor wretches to our left. They and their horses have succumbed from starvation, and beyond us, at our right, smoke the remains of a half-starved horse which Black Hawk cooked to succor his famished band."

Three weary days they marched on over the bluffs and forests, abandoning their exhausted horses and trudging forward with bare and bleeding feet, and everywhere along the trail were sickening evidences of the enemy's destitute condition. They passed scores who lay dead by the wayside.

On the second of August the rising sun lifted the curtains of mist rolling before them, and revealed the Mississippi. Shouts from the advanced guard of scouts announced: "The enemy! The enemy ahead!"

"Halt and dismount!" commanded General Atkinson.

The most intense excitement prevailed among the troops. All seemed to realize that the final conflict was at hand, and the officers experienced much difficulty in curbing their enthusiasm for an immediate encounter. Knapsacks and baggage were thrown aside and pack horses tethered close by, while the shouts and shots from the spy battalion added to the general confusion.

"Form your men in line!" ordered General Atkinson, stationing his forces in the center. "Dodge to the right, Posey and Alexander to the left, and Henry to guard the rear."

"Why is Henry ordered to the rear, Elijah?" questioned Captain Horn.

"Don't you scent the trick, Captain?" replied Elijah. "General Atkinson is miffed because General Henry won the battle at Wisconsin Heights without direction or aid from himself. Atkinson intends to have the glory of the final conflict."

"You have hit it right, Elijah," returned Captain Horn. "But where are we?"

"This series of high bluffs forms the eastern banks of the Mississippi. Between them and the river stretch three miles of lowland thickly timbered with underbrush, logs, tall grass and weeds, ending in a slough of stagnant water. These two islands in the Mississippi lie about one hundred and fifty yards from shore. I think the enemy are heading for them. Our scouting party sighted some of them in the slough. The Bad Axe River empties into the Mississippi two miles above us."

"Hark! The scouts have discovered something!" exclaimed Captain Horn.

"Black Hawk and his warriors are on the bluffs above us!" cried the scouts.

And turning, the soldiers beheld the Hawk and twenty warriors guarding the bluffs two miles to the north.

"Forward, march!" ordered General Atkinson, and the next instant the entire force, save Henry's company, were dashing over the bluff after the savages.

Five minutes later three spies from Ewing's battalion mounted the bluff and galloped to General Henry.

"General," they shouted, "we have discovered the trail of the main band, leading to the lowlands toward the islands. The Hawk's warriors used a decoy to lead our forces away from the main band of the Indians so they might gain the Mississippi in safety."

"All hands to the lowlands!" ordered General Henry, and the fearless General, followed by his excited soldiers, dashed down the bluff into the lowlands, where they met a galling fire from three hundred and fifty savages. A desperate hand-to-hand battle ensued; the air rang with the whoops of the maddened warriors, mingled with the cries of the troops and the shrill notes of General Henry's bugle ordering, "Charge! Charge!"

Back toward the river, from tree to tree, they forced the savages at the point of the bayonet, while women and children crowded in their one canoe and paddled toward the islands. Others plunged madly into the river; some gained the islands, while others were swept on with the current and drowned.

Above the din of battle sounded a steamer's shrill whistle.

"The Warrior!" cried Elijah Kilbourn. "She passed down the Mississippi to Prairie du Chien last night and gave the Indians a savage salute. Captain Throckmorton evidently means to take a hand in the fray."

"See!" replied Captain Horn. "He has anchored off the islands and has sent the savages a salute from his six-pounder. Elijah, there is Black Hawk standing on the banks waving a white flag. How did he reach the bank?"

"Doubtless took a short cut by a secret trail, while his twenty warriors are fleeing to the Bad Axe to decoy our main Army. Listen to the Hawk!"

"Send me a canoe!" shouted Black Hawk. "I want to come aboard and surrender myself that I may save our women and children."

"You cannot decoy me," retorted Captain Throckmorton. "Come over in your canoe if you wish to surrender."

"I have no canoe," replied the Hawk.

But one of his braves snatched the flag and sprang into the river, swimming with one hand and waving the flag high overhead with the other.

"Run and hide!" screamed a Winnebago from the steamer. "The whites are going to shoot."

The flag bearer dived beneath the water and scrambled behind some old logs, while his comrades shielded themselves behind the trees. In a few moments the firing began from the boat, and the Indians returned it with steady aim.

"What has become of the Hawk, Elijah?" questioned Captain Horn.

"Retired to some protected bluff where he can direct the fight. The nonacceptance of his flag of truce means that the Indians will fight to the last man."

"And what a cruel end for the Indians!" returned Captain Horn. "I am glad Abraham Lincoln is not here. It is a horrid sight, Elijah, to witness women and children suffering and shot down like wild beasts. It is enough to make the heart of the most hardened belch ache!"

"Indeed so!" admitted Elijah. "Here come General Atkinson, Dodge, Taylor and all our men, maddened, desperate from hunger, exposure and delayed action. I tell you, Captain Horn, the Indians are catching hell!"

Down thru the lowlands dashed the Army, cutting their way thru the rank weeds and scattering death along their trail. Into the ranks of the tottering Indians they charged with bayonets and musketry, while the steamer's cannon voiced its thunder of death.

Above the carnage of battle rose the shrieks of women and children. Mothers, plunging madly into the water, attempted to reach the islands with helpless babes upon their backs. The braves closed in behind them, swimming with one arm and returning the fire of the oncoming Army with the other.

"Those savages in the water are putting up the bravest defense it has ever been my privilege to witness!" exclaimed Robert Anderson.

"But Dodge is the sleuth on their path. He is leading his men over to the island," said Captain Horn. "See! They are wading to their necks, and over at the end of the island Taylor has landed his forces. Thank God, this horror is nearly ended!"

"Who is here?" exclaimed Elijah, springing into the long grass at his side from where a groan proceeded.

The next instant an Indian's head and musket appeared above the grass. Elijah knocked the musket from the bony hands and stepped backward.

"White Eagle! Great God! Can this be White Eagle and Raven Hair?"

"Yes, Raven Hair and White Eagle! Our wee one, Firefly, lies dead in Raven Hair's blanket."

The woman lifted the corner and revealed the haggard form of a dead babe.

"Starved to death!" ejaculated Elijah. "When have you had anything to eat?"

"A week ago, a little horse flesh. We ate acorns, roots and mosses along the trail to the Bad Axe. The babe sucked

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the bark of the trees, but she died yesterday."

"Let me bury her here," offered Elijah.

"No," moaned Raven Hair, seating herself on the log over which she had fallen. "Our wee one shall not rest in this cruel country. She shall go with us to the Iowa country."

"Come, Raven Hair!" said White Eagle, helping her to her feet. "We must make for the island; there are soldiers headed this way."

"White Eagle," cautioned Elijah, "our Army holds the large island and will not let one of your band escape. You spared my life at Old Man's Creek and I will help you here. Seek the small island and remain hidden until the battle ends. A raft will carry you safely to the Iowa side. This way, White Eagle."

And Elijah parted the tall grass, while White Eagle shouldered his musket and moved cautiously along, keeping his eyes on the soldiers moving along the shore opposite the large island. Blood oozed from the Indian's bare feet. The remnants of his buckskin suit hung in tatters, revealing the spare bones of his limbs. The deep-set eyes, hollow cheeks and wasted form of Raven Hair betrayed the suffering of the long march. Not a vestige of her former beauty remained. She tottered like an aged woman and clutched firmly the corner of the blanket holding her babe.

Elijah led them to an inner arm of the shore opposite the smaller island, a hundred yards away. A brave passed them on horseback, heading his horse for the island.

"Swing hold of the horse's tail, Raven Hair," directed White Eagle.

Holding in her teeth the corner of the blanket wrapping the dead babe, the Indian woman clutched the horse's tail firmly with both hands, and thus gained the island in safety. Standing behind a tree, she waited the coming of her husband.

Swimming with one hand and holding his musket above the water with the other, White Eagle approached the island. Then a roar from the steamer's cannon scattered shot far over the surface of the water and the arm of the struggling Indian fell helpless at his side.

"Raven Hair! Raven Hair!" moaned his blanching lips.

The wife bound the dead babe across her back and, leaping into the water, gathered the limp form in her arms. Blood stained her arms and breast where rested her husband's head.

"Raven Hair!" he pleaded. "My fight is ended. Leave me and the wee one to our watery graves and return to your people."

"No, no, White Eagle!" remonstrated Raven Hair. "We will journey together to the Happy Hunting Ground. Nowhere in the vast forests of America is there rest or shelter for the Indians. But the Father of Waters will bear us safely to the Spirit Land."

And the oncoming current swept the world-weary travelers to a resting-place far beyond the cruelty of selfish white men.

Half an hour later the steamer's cannon ceased its reign of terror. Two boats lowered and headed for the main shore, where Lieutenant Anderson, Captain Horn and Elijah were assisting Dr. Philleo in caring for the wounded.

Lieutenant Jefferson Davis landed from the boats.

"Boys," he cried, "I bring you the good tidings that the Black Hawk War is ended. One hundred and fifty Indians lie dead upon the island; fifty men, women and children are held prisoners on the steamer. I am come with boats to carry the wounded there. We are to proceed to Prairie du Chien as soon as possible, where we shall be discharged from service."

"Have any of the Indians escaped?" questioned Captain Horn.

"Yes, some three hundred escaped to the Iowa country, but a band of Sioux begged the privilege of pursuing them and are now on their trail."

'Did General Atkinson consent to the Sioux bloodhounds tracking these exhausted warriors within our lines?' questioned Captain Horn.

"He did," returned Jefferson Davis.

"Did we not wage this war to drive the Sauks across the Mississippi to their own lands?" exclaimed the Captain.

"And, now, we are hiring the Sioux to follow them and butcher them for obeying orders. Abraham Lincoln told us that we should have enough of which to be ashamed before this campaign ended! I tell you this Black Hawk War will form one of the blackest pages of our country's history. We have trampled every rule of honorable warfare under foot!"

"Never mind, Horn!" cut in Elijah Kilbourn. "It belongs with the past, and to the victor belongs the spoils. Is Black Hawk captured, Davis?"

"No!" replied Lieutenant Davis. "Altho defeated, Black Hawk still roams the forests, the unconquered chieftain of the Wisconsin."

CHAPTER XX.

THE CAPTURE OF BLACK HAWK.

ON ONE of the forest-crowned bluffs overlooking the Mississippi, Black Hawk and the Prophet stood concealed by a latticed thicket of underbrush. The evidence of failure of their cause and of the calamities which had overtaken their people was everywhere apparent.

The war was ended; the belchings of the steamer's cannon had ceased; the roar of musketry, the wild shouts of troops, the blood-curdling war whoops had died away.

Silently the boats lowered from the steamer plied back and forth between the island and the mainland, conveying the wounded and troops to the steamer, which had arrived to transport them to Prairie du Chien.

Expressions of rage, revenge and despair crossed the chieftain's face as he stood erect, arms folded, gazing over the endless stretch of water. The purple mists were lowering over the great river. Across it, on the bluffs of the Iowa country, the westering sun burned blood red, staining the waters of the Mississippi a crimson hue. Tears coursed down the chieftain's face as he recalled the last time he had witnessed these tokens of evil omen from his Watch Tower, the night before he was driven from his ancestral Sau-ke-nuk.

Turning to the Prophet, Black Hawk said:

"Wau-be-kee-shik, the Great Spirit has given the victory to the Americans. But they shall not capture us in the presence of our people's suffering and defeat. Let us flee to the Dalles of the Wisconsin."

And turning to the east, the chieftain led the way thru the tangled underbrush, thru swamps and rivers, up hill and down thru these wildernesses of the forest primeval, and entered the valley of the Lemonwier. In the afternoon of the second day, they scaled the lofty heights of the Seven Mile Bluff. From this unobstructed view, the fugitives could discern the approach of friends or enemies for many miles. They sat down beneath the shade of wide-spreading elms, with a background of evergreen.

Behind them vast stretches of prairie rolled away into valleys and lowlands, dotted with groves variegated with the hues of the coming autumn. Beneath them swept the stately Wisconsin, brownhued from its contact with the sandstone formations and vegetable debris thru which it had cut its way, and swinging on with majestic curves between the rocks towering on either side, which form one of Nature's unique creations—the Dalles.

No word passed between the two companions. The Indian is a worshiper at Nature's shrine; to him the wonders of Nature are visible tokens of that divine mind which has shaped the destinies of the world from the beginning.

Black Hawk's eyes lingered on the trails piercing the forests, over which Indians had come and gone for centuries on errands of love, adventure and war. No smoke curled above the treetops in any direction

"Wau-be-kee-shik," said Black Hawk, "I will keep guard here, and do you hasten to the Winnebago village, see if any of our friends remain and secure food from them."

The Prophet started at once to obey the chieftain's command and the Hawk stretched himself beneath the shade and fell asleep. He wakened at sunset and, emerging from his evergreen bower, crept

These Physicians Warn Public Against Taking Substitutes for Nuxated Iron

Say That Ordinary Metallic Iron Preparations Cannot Possibly Give the Same

STRENGTH, POWER AND ENDURANCE

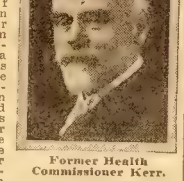
As Organic Iron. Besides they may upset the digestion, disturb the secretions and thereby do more harm than good, and that Health Officials and Physicians everywhere should caution the public against accepting inferior substitutions in medicines.

Dr. James Francis Sullivan, formerly Physician of Bellevue Hospital (Outdoor Dept.) New York, and the Westchester County Hospital; Dr. Schuyler C. Jaques, Visiting Surgeon of St. Elizabeth's Hospital, New York City; Dr. A. J. Newman, former Police Surgeon of Chicago; Dr. Ferdinand King, New York Physician and Medical Author, and others give valuable advice and information on the use of organic iron as a tonic, strength and blood builder.

Careful investigation by designated physicians among druggists and patients has revealed the fact that there are thousands of people taking iron who do not distinguish between organic iron and metallic iron and that such persons often fail to obtain the vital energy, strength and endurance which they seek, simply because they have taken the wrong form of iron. They seem to think iron is iron on a good deal the same theory that a potato would be a potato whether cooked or raw, entirely ignoring the fact that the cooking process makes certain important cellular changes in the potato whereby it is rendered far more easy of assimilation by the blood and tissues. No one would hardly expect to derive the same strength from eating raw potatoes that he would from eating cooked potatoes, yet, according to the opinions of some physicians who have made a study of the subject, taking raw, unprepared, metallic iron is somewhat like eating raw potatoes.

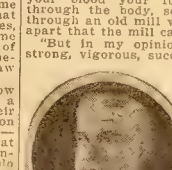
Therefore, physicians mentioned below advise those who feel the need of a strength and blood builder, to go to their family doctors and obtain a prescription calling for organic iron—Nuxated Iron—and present this to their druggist so that there may be no question about obtaining the proper article. But if they do not wish to go to the trouble of getting a prescription for Nuxated Iron then be sure to look on the label and see that the words NUXATED IRON are printed thereon. Not Nux and Iron nor any other form of Iron, but NUXATED IRON.

The remarkable results produced by Nuxated Iron and its widespread sale (it being estimated that over three million people annually are today using it) has led to the offering of numerous substitutes by unscrupulous physicians say that health officials and doctors everywhere should caution the public against accepting substitutes in medicines, and they especially warn against accepting substitutes for Nuxated Iron, which, instead of being organic iron may be nothing more than a metallic iron compound which may in some cases prove more harm than good. The widespread publication of the following information in all Nuxated Iron advertisements has been suggested by Dr. James Francis Sullivan, formerly Physician in Bellevue Hospital (Outdoor Dept.) New York, and the Westchester County Hospital; Dr. Schuyler C. Jaques, Visiting Surgeon St. Elizabeth's Hospital, New York City; Dr. Ferdinand King, New York Physician and Medical Author, and others, so that the public may be informed on this subject and protected from the use of metallic iron under the delusion that it is Nuxated Iron, or at least something as good as Nuxated Iron. In regard to the value of Nuxated Iron, Dr. Sullivan says: "I have strongly emphasized the great necessity of physicians making blood examinations of their weak, anaemic, run-down patients. Thousands of persons go on year after year suffering from physical weakness and a highly nervous condition due to lack of sufficient iron in their red blood corpuscles without realizing the real and true cause of their trouble. Without iron in your blood your food merely passes through the body, something like corn through an old mill with rollers so wide apart that the mill can't grind.



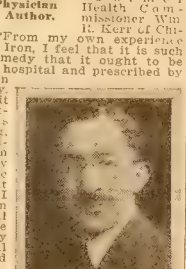
Former Health Commissioner Kerr.

"But in my opinion you can't make strong, vigorous, successful, sturdy iron men by feeding them on metallic iron. The old forms of metallic iron must go through a semi-digestive process to transform them into organic iron—Nuxated Iron — before they are so ready to be taken up and assimilated by the human system."



Dr. Ferdinand King, New York Physician and Medical Author.

Former Health Commissioner Wm. R. Kerr of Chicago says: "From my own experience with Nuxated Iron, I feel that it is such a valuable remedy that it ought to be used in every hospital and prescribed by every physician in this country. I have taken it myself and experienced its health-giving, strength-building effect. I am well past my three score years and want to say that I believe my own great physical activity is due largely today to my personal use of Nuxated Iron."



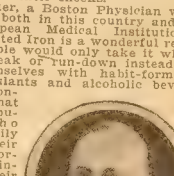
Dr. A. J. Newman, Late Police Surgeon of the City of Chicago, and Former House Surgeon Jefferson Park Hospital, Chicago.

While former Health Commissioner Kerr of not himself a physician, still his experience in handling public health problems must give his opinion more than ordinary weight.

Dr. A. J. Newman, Former Police Surgeon of Chicago, and former House Surgeon, Jefferson Park Hospital, Chicago, says: "It has been my particular duty during the past six years to assist in keeping Chicago's five thousand blue coats in good health and perfect fighting trim, so that they would be physically equipped to withstand all manner of storms and ravages of nature's elements Recently I was prompted through an endorsement of Nuxated Iron by Dr. Schuyler C. Jaques, Visiting Surgeon, St. Elizabeth's Hospital, New York, to give it a trial. This remedy has proven through my own tests of it to excel any preparation I have ever used for creating red blood, building up the nerves, strengthening the muscles and correcting digestive disorders."

Dr. Ferdinand King says: "Doctors should prescribe more organic iron—Nuxated Iron—for their nervous, run-down, weak, haggard looking patients. Pallor means anaemia. The skin of the anaemic man or woman is pale, the flesh flabby, the muscles lack tone, the brain fags and the memory fails, and often they become weak, nervous, irritable, despondent and melancholy. When the iron goes from the blood of women, the roses go from their cheeks."

Dr. E. Sauer, a Boston Physician who has studied both in this country and in great European Medical Institutions, said, "Nuxated Iron is a wonderful remedy If people would only take it when they feel weak or run-down instead of dosing themselves with habit-forming drugs, stimulants and alcoholic beverages, I am convinced that there are thousands who might readily build up their red blood corpuscles, increase their physical energy and get themselves into a condition to ward off the millions of disease germs that are almost continually around us. It is surprising how many people suffer from iron deficiency and do not know it. If you are not strong or well you owe it to yourself to make the following test. See how long you can work or how far you can walk without becoming tired. Next take two five-grain tablets of Nuxated Iron three times per day after meals for two weeks. Then test your strength again and see how much you have gained."



Dr. E. Sauer, A Boston Physician who has studied in great European Medical Institutions.

Dr. Schuyler C. Jaques, Visiting Surgeon of St. Elizabeth's Hospital, New York City, said: "I have never before given out any medical information or advice for publication, as I generally do not believe in it. But in the case of Nuxated Iron I feel I would be remiss in my duty not to mention it. I have taken it myself and given it to my patients with most surprising and satisfactory results. And those who wish quickly to increase their strength, power and endurance will find it a most remarkable and wonderfully effective remedy."

NOTE—Nuxated Iron, which is prescribed and recommended above by physicians, is not a secret remedy, but one which is well known to druggists everywhere. Unlike the older inorganic iron products it is easily assimilated, and does not injure the teeth, make them black nor upset the stomach. The manufacturers guarantee successful and entirely satisfactory results to every purchaser or they will refund your money. It is dispensed by all good druggists.

Dr. James Francis Sullivan, Formerly Physician of Bellevue Hospital (Outdoor Dept.), New York, and the Westchester County Hospital.

cautiously along, listening for the return of his companion and appeasing his hunger with acorns, mosses and roots.

Late in the evening he heard the Prophet's signal, the whip-poor-will's whistle, which he immediately answered. Three minutes later he heard the Prophet's whispered call: "Black Hawk!"

The rising moon revealed the Prophet mounting the bank near him.

"Black Hawk!" began the Prophet, in a rapid undertone. "Our Winnebago village is deserted; the people have evidently fled to the Winnebagoes at La Crosse on the Mississippi. I have not found one morsel of food, but I have discovered that runners, either friends or foes, are on our trail."

"We must expect that the great white chief will strive to capture us," replied the Hawk, "and he may have hired some of his Winnebago allies to track us. We have not a moment to lose. We must separate. I will occupy the nest in the gray pine, and do you hasten to the cave over the Devil's Elbow in the Dalles. In these recesses we will await our fate."

They separated, the Hawk hastening along the edge of the bluff until he gained a bold promontory from which towered a straggling gray pine. He climbed the trunk for a distance of twenty feet, where a thicket of branches, extending in every direction, was so closely matted together that they formed a perfect nest and protection from outward view. He settled in his nest and awaited events.

On the following day runners passed along the trail at the base of the cliff. But the Hawk feared that they were not friends and did not sound the signal. Late in the afternoon of the third day two tall chiefs swung into view. The keen eye of the Hawk at once recognized his former Winnebago friends, Chaetar and one-eyed Decorah. Fearing their attitude toward him in his defeat, however, he did not signal them, but watched every movement safely hidden in his nest.

The two chiefs made their bivouac at the foot of the cliff over which the Hawk was safely nested, and he was able to hear every word they uttered.

"Our orders are to capture Black Hawk alive," said Decorah.

"And two thousand dollars each will we receive," replied Chaetar; "besides presents from our people."

They talked over their plans of searching the trails on the following day, but soon the whispers ceased and the chieftains were asleep.

The heart of Black Hawk burned with indignation. He longed to seek revenge, but curbed the rash desire and awaited the midnight hour. Then he stealthily descended and struck the trail leading thru the forest crowning the high rocks. The moon was in the third quarter and shone brightly above the treetops which cast weird shadows along the darksome forest.

The Hawk followed the trail five miles in a southwesterly direction and paused at the prairie entrance of the Witch's Gulch. He drew two flints from his pockets, constantly striking them as he entered the gloomy cavern, which stretched three-quarters of a mile thru the rocks to the Wisconsin.

By the emitted sparks he made his way thru the center of the stream, winding in many curves and scallops thru the gulch to join the Wisconsin. In many places he waded breast high thru the cold water, as it fretted its way down, down, carving fantastic shapes and hollows in the friable rocks. He paused to drink from the Witch's Teacup, an immense bowl which the stream had worn perfectly round from the rocks below. Above it, in the sides of the cavern, his eyes rested on the Witch's Armchair, decorated at its feet with mosses and ferns, while evergreens towered a hundred feet to the dome of the cavern where the rocky sides met in many places. Thru the openings of the dome the late moon cast ghastly shadows, making the interior of the cavern weird and uncanny. Along the path ahead echoed the roar of the falls, made by the stream plunging into the Witch's Teakettle, ten feet below, where the water constantly foamed and boiled.

The Hawk braced his arms on the rocks overhanging the falls and leaped over them into the stream below. As he journeyed onward the rush of the Wisconsin and the wind wafted the mists of the river into the gulch, and a moment later the Hawk paused at the Wisconsin entrance. The darkness which precedes the dawn hovered over the waters. But Black Hawk knew his bearings. Scaling the high rocks above him, he hastened along the trail and descended the rocks to the Wisconsin above the Narrows. He plunged into the swirling waters and battled his way against the current to the opposite bank. He stood on the Devil's Elbow and sounded the signal, the whip-poor-will's whistle. It was answered and the Prophet emerged from the cave and joined his companion standing on the Devil's Elbow.

"Follow me!" urged Black Hawk. "We have not a minute to lose. The enemy are on our trail."

Silently and swiftly they scaled the rocks and cut their way thru the trackless forests northwest toward the Mississippi.

On the morning of the third day, they entered the wigwam of the Winnebago chief at Prairie La Crosse.

"Black Hawk!" exclaimed the chief, greeting his comrade. "Runners have besieged our village searching for you. Where from?"

"From the Dalles of the Wisconsin," replied Black Hawk. "We will cross the Mississippi at once if you will furnish us a canoe."

"Not until our squaws have served you food. Sit down and tell of your journey and the truth regarding the battle at the Bad Axe."

As the fugitive chiefs took the proffered seats, the curtained doorway lifted and Chaetar and Decorah entered. An expression of grim despair settled over the face of the Hawk. Vanished the dream of his outwitting his white foes, of his return to wife and children and a home of peace in the Iowa country.

He remembered that he was still the representative of the noble Sac band. Rising, he approached his Judas friends with quiet dignity. He faced them with an expression of proud contempt and extended his hands for the shackles, allowing his arms to be bound without a word of remonstrance. Accompanied by the Prophet, he followed his captors to the river bank, where his whilom Winnebago hosts watched his departure with absolute indifference.

What was to be the fate of Black Hawk? Unless you are intimately familiar with history you may not know what was done with this valiant chief. In the next installment of this absorbing narrative an account of Black Hawk as a prisoner of war is graphically given.

* * *

A Modest Violet.

A SUBEDITOR on a north of Ireland newspaper, late one night, as he was reducing a heap of "flimsies," heard a modest tap on the subeditorial door.

"Come in," he murmured, wearily.

A typical Hibernian entered.

"I have an item of news," he said.

The subeditor drew a sheet of paper toward him.

"Yes," he said, poising his pencil.

His visitor threw back his shoulders and recited: "This evening a plucky rescue was effected in the River Foyle. An elderly man was walking along the quay side when his foot slipped, and, overbalancing, he fell into the river. A young man named William Doherty, who was standing near at the time, without divesting himself of his clothing, plunged in and succeeded in dragging the man out of danger. We think William Doherty should be awarded the Humane Society's medal for his plucky deed."

He paused, and the subeditor looked up with interest at the man.

"Just as a matter of form," he said, "I would like your name. It is usual, you see, in the case of an outsider bringing in news."

"Och!" said the visitor. "I'm the man who did the plucky rescue—William Doherty."

* * *

Flooring the Speaker.

A TEMPERANCE lecturer was preaching to the young men on his favorite theme and said: "Now, boys, when I ask you a question you mustn't be afraid to speak out and answer me. When you look around and see all these fine houses, farms and cattle, do you ever think who owns them all now? Your fathers own them, do they not?"

"Yes, sir," shouted a hundred voices.

"Well, where will your fathers be in fifty years from now?"

"Dead!" shouted the boys.

"That's right. And who will own all this property then?"

"Us boys!" shouted the urchins.

"Right. Now, tell me, did you ever, in going along the streets, notice the drunkards lounging around the public house doors, waiting for some one to treat them?"

"Yes, sir; lots of them."

"Well, where will they be in fifty years from now?"

"Dead!" exclaimed the boys.

"And who will be the drunkards then?"

"Us boys!"

The lecturer was thunderstruck for a moment, but, recovering himself, tried to tell the boys how to escape such a fate.

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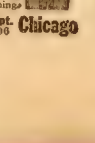

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These Pictures Show Gradual Reduction of Excessive Fatness

Figure No. 1, in this illustration, shows us a lady with a really pretty face, good features, and fine head of hair, yet EXCESSIVE FATNESS HAS SPOILED HER CHARM. She is out of the race as far as appearances go. Now note the wonderful improvement in appearance shown in figures Nos. 2 and 3, as the fat gradually disappears until we see in figure No. 4 the lady in all her charming beauty, normal in weight, with a PERFECT FORM, GOOD HEALTH, NEW ENERGY, NEW INTEREST and NEW AMBITION. Note what a few users say.

Mrs. Susan Minton, Lake Park, Ga., says: "Your ADIPO treatment reduced me from 215 to 129 pounds and my general health is now better than ever. Before taking it I could hardly walk any distance, but now I can run and get around as when a child. It has been several years since I took the treatment and the reduction has been permanent".

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THE FEUD OF THE SCHOOLS

By Gerald Harden

To Refresh Your Memory

HAZELDEAN and Adelphi colleges are bitter rivals. It is unwritten law that the students of one may not keep company with those of the other. But Jimmy Dalton of Hazeldean admires Madalyn Lester, daughter of an Adelphi professor. The tires of his motorcar are punctured and he is pelted with eggs when he takes Madalyn for a ride. The Hazeldean boys determine to avenge the insult to their star pitcher. They spread the report that his arm is injured and that he is likely to be in poor shape when the rival baseball teams meet. The fellows at Adelphi fall for Hazeldean's bear story long enough to pool their funds on the winning of the game—at ruinous odds should they lose. When the suspicion arises that they have been "done," Tommy Castle volunteers to proceed to Hazeldean as a spy. After a humiliating misadventure he gets back to Adelphi with the news—that Jimmy Dalton is in his best form. The night before the game a fake summons from Madalyn Lester, telephoned by one purporting to be her brother, brings Jimmy hurrying from Hazeldean to Adelphi, straight into the arms of the conspirators. The following day sees the baseball game going steadily against Hazeldean, for Dalton has not returned. Tommy Castle and his Adelphi friends sit in the grandstand counting their winnings. Behind them Madalyn Lester observes their covert gloating with growing apprehension, and at the end of the second inning she "mixes in."

This story began in the March 2, No. 9, issue of the Ledger. Back copies may be obtained from our agents, news dealers, or by mail direct from the office of publication.

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CHAPTER X.—(Continued.)

"STOP it!" he snapped, as he sought to squirm away. But before he could utter another word a heavy automobile robe was thrown over his head and shoulders. The arms which had been holding him from behind were loosened, but two more from the front took their place.

Then a rope was thrown about his ankles and drawn painfully tight. He felt himself lifted, carried a few feet and thrust feet first into the taxi. Two men apparently pushed in behind him.

"Not a word now, fellows!" he heard in a muffled voice, as the door of the cab was drawn shut. The machine was off at once at full speed.

For a moment he lay quiet and helpless in his bewildering surprise. He tried to think what this strange proceeding might mean. Of course there was only one explanation, he decided. Adelphi men were trying to kidnap him. But why? A moment's reflection convinced him.

"They want to keep me out of tomorrow's game," he muttered to himself. "Gee whiz! What a scurvy trick!"

Then both of his bound feet reared up violently. They landed against the glass of one of the windows of the cab. With a crash the pieces went tumbling to the roadway.

Thru the robe that almost smothered him he felt a stiff belt upon the side of his face. His head was pushed down to the floor of the cab and two arms closed tightly about his legs. He tried to twist loose, but he found himself utterly helpless.

The taxicab appeared to draw out of the road and halt. Somebody got down and swung open a creaking gate. Then the car passed on along a very rough road. It finally stopped and the door was flung open. There had not been a single word spoken since the ride began.

He was lifted roughly out and laid on the ground, one of his captors taking the precaution to sit upon his feet while another settled himself upon his chest. His surprise having completely passed, anger took its place, anger so fierce that it caused his red hair to stand on end. He admitted afterward that he was in a mood for nothing short of murder.

"Anybody got a light?" he heard one of the group inquire, in a gruff voice, evidently meant to be disguised.

A match was struck and then another. He could see nothing thru the covering about his head, but he felt himself lifted again and carried forward. Apparently he was being conveyed into some sort of a building, because he heard boards creak under the footsteps of his captors.

"Here, stop your blamed foolishness," he yelled, "and let me out of this!"

Madalyn Found Herself Clapping.

For answer a hand was pressed down over his mouth, almost smothering him. Up a flight of steep stairs he was taken, to be deposited roughly on a clump of hay or straw. He realized that he must have reached some secluded spot, apparently somebody's barn.

Suddenly the robe covering his head was removed. In the dark he was unable to discern a single object. Yet he struck out viciously. Tho his feet were still bound, he launched first one fist and then the other in two violent swings into which he put every atom of his strength. The first encountered only the air, but the second landed full upon somebody's face.

"Uh!" he heard, and then a heavy body measured its length upon the floor. He half turned and again let go with both fists. Again the first blow found no mark, but the second sank into somebody's stomach. There was a muffled oath and a cry of "Get him, quick!"

Instantly he seemed to be grabbed by many arms. It was as if the tentacles of an octopus had settled all around him. He felt himself borne heavily to the floor. For a moment he lay stunned. When full consciousness returned he was trussed tightly—shoulders, arms, hips and legs. When he sought to move he found that he had been tied securely to the floor. He was about to open his lips to cry out, when a gag was thrust between his lips and fastened about his head. With a sense of dismay he limply collapsed.

He heard his captors stumbling down the stairs. He heard the taxicab buzz into motion and move away. Then all was still.

CHAPTER XI.

THE RESCUE.

MADALYN LESTER looked so imperious and yet so beautiful that Bud Northcote found himself helpless to refuse to obey her directions. He moved over to the open field in which a long line of automobiles stood parked. She followed him closely.

"Here, we'll take this one," she announced positively, pointing to a smart runabout.

"Why, that—that's Prexy Leonard's!" Northcote expostulated.

"Good!" she replied steadily. "We'll take it. I'm sure he won't mind. If he does, I'll take the blame. Climb in."

Bud clambered into the driver's seat, while Madalyn put one dainty foot into the car and then paused.

"You can drive, can't you?" she asked.

"Yes, after a fashion," her companion responded.

"Well, do your best," the girl said, as she seated herself beside him. "If you don't do a very good job, I'll take the wheel away from you."

They spurted out into the street and moved along steadily until they struck the long road that led up the hill toward Adelphi. The car was going at a good clip.

"John," Madalyn said, leaning over so that her lips were close to Northcote's ear, "we're on the way to save the honor of your dear old Adelphi."

Bud turned his head to look at her in surprise.

"I—I don't quite understand," he returned, a bit confused.

"No, because you and the boys who joined you in that wild prank last night did not stop to think of what you were really doing, did you?"

Northcote's ruddy cheeks flushed to a deep red.

"You've still got me guessing, Madalyn," he answered in a fluster.

"Let's not beat about the bush, John," the girl declared decidedly. "You know where Jimmy Dalton is, don't you?"

Northcote's hands lost their grip on the wheel and the car swerved sharply before he recovered himself.

"How should I know?" he sparred, somewhat defiantly.

"John, I've been acting on intuition and suspicion. Likewise, I know that you're an honest young man. I don't want to preach, but I'm sure that when you come to think about it seriously, you'll admit that Adelphi doesn't want her athletic record stained by any unfair tactics. She doesn't want her opponents to be able to say that we're unsportsmanlike up here. She doesn't want anybody able to say that any victory that is won by her is marred with dishonor. Now, does she?"

"N-no," Northcote agreed reluctantly.

"Well, what will people say when it comes out as it must," went on Madalyn, warming to her argument, "that Dalton was kept from playing in the game today by downright unfair methods?"

"But how do you know he was?" combated Bud. "How do you know he didn't sneak away himself?"

"Now, John, I didn't expect that of you," the girl said, with a tinge of sadness in her voice, "I really didn't."

Northcote felt exceedingly uncomfortable. He wished he hadn't left the game.

"John," this time she took a new tack and there was a surprising authority in her tone, "what were you doing with that big robe on your arm last evening? You remember you passed our house just about 8 o'clock. I saw you from the front porch. Then a few minutes later I heard a scuffle and a sort of a cry down at the corner. I thought it strange at the time, but when it wasn't repeated I forgot about it—until this afternoon when Jimmy Dalton didn't show up for the game and nobody had an explanation. Then all of a sudden everything came back to me. I remembered you and the robe and the sound of the scuffle and the cry. John, be honest now, tell me what it was all about." The girl's voice was full of gentle pleading.

Northcote kept quite still with his eyes set intently on the road before them.

"I haven't got anything to tell," he said finally.

"So that's the way you're going to take out of it?" she returned sternly. "I'm sorry. I thought better of you."

By this time the tops of some of the Adelphi College halls were looming above the trees ahead. Madalyn looked at them seriously and glanced at the little watch fastened about her wrist.

"We have been gone from the game back there fifteen minutes," she announced, nodding her head in the direction of Slayton Field. "Maybe this time all hope is gone of seeing your opponents get fair play. Maybe the lead we've got is too much to be overcome. But if it is, it will be no credit to us. And it will bring infinite dishonor to those halls we see yonder. You love Adelphi, I know, John, because you always fight so hard for it. But did you ever stop to think that the honor of your alma mater must be founded on something more substantial than her athletic victories? Don't you believe that it is rather made by the honor of her individual students? Please, John, don't be foolish now. Be what I know you surely are—manly and honest?"

The girl gently laid her hand on a sleeve of Northcote's coat. There was an appeal in the touch that went deeper even than her words.

"But I can't blab on the other fellows," he burst forth at length. "I'm no squealer."

"Nobody asked you to blab on anybody," she retorted quickly. "In fact, I won't ask you to tell me [illegible] now. I'm willing to leave it all to your own sense of right."

Bud's eyes again studied the road ahead of him. They had now topped the last hill and were scooting down the incline toward town.

"I only hope Dalton can get into the game before it ends," Madalyn went on dreamily. "It would be so much better for everybody."

Northcote glanced at her furtively out of the corner of an eye. Then his face set sternly and, with a quick twist of the wheel, he drove the car into a byroad. Along this they sped for several hundred yards until they reached what used to be old Joe Colburn's roadhouse. It was abandoned now, altho it had been a popular resort for student parties until college authorities heard of its frivolities and shut down on them.

Back of the house stood a rambling old barn in the early stages of decay. Bud stopped the car and hopped from his seat. As he did so, both of them heard a faint cry, apparently issuing from the building.

"Did you——" Madalyn began.

"Yes, yes!" Northcote broke in. "I'll be back in a jiffy."

He sped across the overgrown yard and disappeared within the barn. He climbed the steep stairs to the loft.

"For God's sake, let me out of this!" a voice cried from the semi-darkness.

Bud groped his way to the spot from whence the sound came, knelt beside the wretched figure of Jimmy Dalton and, plucking out a pocketknife, quickly severed the ropes that held him prisoner.

"Thanks, whoever you are!" gasped the released Hazeldean student. "I'd begun to think I was done for."

He slowly rose to his feet. Even in the half-light he was a miserable counterpart of the spruce figure that had entered Adelphi on the preceding evening. He had managed to gnaw away the gag that had been placed in his mouth, but the effort had left the skin red and bruised. His coat was sadly rumpled and his trousers bore a wide tear where he had vainly tried to wrench himself loose from his fastenings.

"A drink—give me a drink!" he muttered. "I'm dying for a drink!"

"Sure, we'll go to the pump," Northcote answered, leading Jimmy unsteadily to the stairs.

They descended and reached the outer air. Dalton looked around strangely and twisted himself carefully to find where

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he hadn't a sore spot. This was quite hard.

"What time is it?" he asked suddenly, looking across the yard to the road where the runabout stood.

"About 3 o'clock," returned Bud.

"Saturday afternoon?" Jimmy asked in dismay.

Northcote nodded soberly.

"Jehosophat, the game!" Dalton exclaimed, and he dived forward toward the road.

Bud followed at his heels, unable to suppress a glance of admiration at the prisoner's pluck.

Madalyn was standing in the car when the pair reached it. There was a smile of exalted pleasure on her face.

"You here?" Jimmy exclaimed. "How funny!"

"Yes, I came after you," she answered happily, "to take you back to the game."

With Northcote clinging to the running board and Dalton at the wheel, they started back for Hazeldean.

"How far is the game?" Jimmy asked, as he pushed on full speed.

"They had started the second inning when we left," Madalyn told him.

"And the score?" he shouted above the rattle of the car.

"Five to nothing against you," the girl replied lightly.

"Jehoshaphat, I've got to change that!" Red-top yelled, as he shot into the open road to Hazeldean. "Oh, if there's only time!"

CHAPTER XII

THE SURPRISE.

AUTO never took the road between Adelphi and Hazeldean faster than did the one Jimmy Dalton drove that famous day in college history. They bumped and bounced about until it appeared at times that they would be hurled into the ditch. Northcote, clinging on for dear life, half a dozen times had his mouth open ready to cry for mercy, but he closed it again when he remembered the mission.

"How did you ever get up to rescue me?" Jimmy yelled to Madalyn between bumps.

She told him with many a halt in the narrative.

"And how did you ever get where we found you?" she cried breathlessly.

He told her laughingly of the bogus telephone call and of his interrupted journey.

"Oh, how could they be so mean?" she exclaimed brokenly.

"Must have known I'd jump at the chance to come up to see you," Jimmy grinned loadly.

The girl hid the flush that welled to her cheeks by turning her face to look at her wrist watch.

"We came up in twenty-five minutes," she explained encouragingly.

"Then we're going back in twenty," returned Dalton, as he pressed on a trifle more speed. "That makes forty-five. They ought to be not further along than the seventh inning when we get there. That'll still give us a chance to eat 'em up."

But the chance looked hopeless when Jimmy reached the field. With the words, "I'll never stop thanking you for this," to Madalyn, he leaped out of the runabout at the gate and at top speed made into the grounds.

Shedding his hat and coat and vest as he ran, he steered straight for the diamond. A quick glance told him that his team was in dire shape, for there were three Adelphi runners on the bases and Doc Holbrook, the poorest of Hazeldean's string of pitchers, stood in the box, nervously fingering the ball.

The game suddenly halted at the odd intrusion of this strange half-clothed figure. Then somebody in the stands recognized the star pitcher.

"Red-top! It's Red-top!" he bawled.

Instantly the whole throng was on its feet. Individual cries of Dalton's name were submerged in a tremendous roar of applause that swept up and embraced even hearty cheers from the Adelphi spectators.

"Red-top! Red-top!" the stands began to chant in unison when the cheers had died down.

"Attaboy! Attaboy!" the bleachers joined in.

"Eat 'em up, eat 'em up!" the crowd spread out on the green commenced to repeat the chorus.

Rexy Lord ran down the line, threw his arms about Dalton and lifted him off his feet in a tight bear hug. The rest of the team gathered round in high glee. They patted Jimmy on the back, jumped into the air and Big Ed Bannon in his exuberance reached down and kissed him on the cheek.

In a jiffy Red-top was told of the straits of Hazeldean. The teams were now playing the first half of the eighth inning. Adelphi had added three runs to the cluster it made in the first, raising its total to eight. Hazeldean had managed to pick up a single run in the third inning and another in the sixth, making its total two. With Adelphi leading by six, the home team had given up hope of overtaking the visitors.

But Jimmy changed the complexion of things instantly. Despite his un-uniformed condition, he insisted on beginning to play at once. He spun his arms around hurriedly as if to give his muscles a little warming up. He looked coolly around the cheering throngs. He fingered the ball lovingly as tho wooing it to perform his bidding. Then he winked mysteriously at his catcher and began to pitch.

With his red hair bristling savagely, he glanced at the three Adelphi base runners, curved his arm in the air and then let the ball go. It sped up to the plate with almost bullet speed, but just before it reached the batsman it took a sharp drop. The break was too quick for the latter to gauge. He swung at the ball, but missed it by half a foot.

"One strike!" bawled the umpire.

"Rah, Red-top!" yelled the Hazeldean stands.

Next Jimmy threw a ball that appeared to lob up to the plate, but just before it arrived there it took a bulge outward. The batter swung again viciously, but the ball was inches beyond the end of his bat.

"Two strikes!" called the umpire.

"Rah, rah, Red-top!" boomed from the Hazeldean stands.

This time Jimmy let go a ball with such speed that the batsman took a step backward. The sphere whizzed over the heart of the plate and chest high.

"Three strikes!" the umpire shouted and waved the batter away.

"Rah, rah, rah, Red-top!" roared the home stands.

"Eat 'em up! Eat 'em up'" was the injunction that followed.

Dalton found the second batter no more difficult to strike out. The third man, too, stood at the plate as tho hypnotized by the terrific speed with which the ball was delivered. He made three futile attempts and then retired. The side was out with three restless runners left stranded on the bases. It was something of a pitching feat and even Adelphi rewarded it with a rousing cheer.

"Don't you want to get into a uniform?" Lord asked Jimmy, as he ran in to the players' bench.

"Naw," Dalton returned. "I only want a safety pin to fasten up this gap in my pants and a pair of 'sneaks' to ease my feet. But first I'm going to ease my thirst."

The bottom of the bucket came to view before he relinquished the drinking cup.

"Now, let's pound out a few runs," he urged, as he trotted to the coaching line.

He had the Adelphi fielders nervous with his first cry:

"Fight 'em now! Fight 'em like sin!" he yelled.

Then he began to prance back and forth like a limber jumping-jack.

Adelphi trembled under the vocal attack. It bungled when Hazeldean bats responded to Dalton's urging. A hit, a base on balls, an error and then another hit sent two runs over the plate.

"Got 'em on the run!" shouted Jimmy, in glee. "Keep it up, fellows, keep it up! We'll win this game right here!"

But Adelphi rallied from its slump and the inning ended with no addition to the home nine's score. Eight to four it stood now, with but one more inning to go. The handicap looked insuperable.

Even Madalyn Lester, who had returned to her seat beside her father, and with shining eyes watched the revival of the Hazeldean team under Jimmy's energetic leadership, found her fond hopes sinking.

Tacks Beeston patted Tommy Castle on the knee and growled in his ear:

"They can't beat us, but that won't stop me from giving Bud one swift biff in the snoot for bringing Dalton back!"

"Oh, lay off!" countered Tommy. "You know Bud always was sweet on Madalyn Lester. I bet you'd have done the same if she'd spotted you."

While Northcote, changing his place of observation so as to avoid his fellow-conspirators, muttered to himself:

"Gee, I wish she'd shed on me some of that mush she wastes on that wild redhead!"

CHAPTER XIII.

THE DEFEAT.

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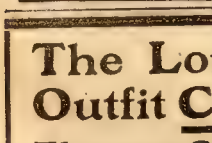

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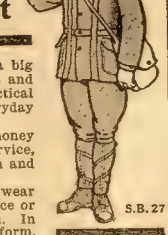

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whiffed the air three times. The second sent up a weak foul fly that Bannon easily caught. The third bent himself nearly double trying to reach two of Jimmy's deceptive out curves, and then stood still while the third strike went over the heart of the plate waist high.

"Here's where we do the trick!" cried Dalton, as he returned to the side line. "They're beat right now, I can see the yellow in their faces."

"Must have got it off some of your eggs," bantered back an Adelphi partisan.

"No, it's not golden yellow I'm seeing now," retorted Red-top, who loved nothing better than verbal give and take. "It's called coward's yellow!"

Harriman led off at the bat for Hazeldean.

"Now, Kid, hit one of your old-timers!" called out Dalton. He ran up to the plate and encouraged the batsman with a solid whack on the shoulder. "Don't spare the cover, Kid. We've got lots of new balls."

By dint of patient waiting, Harriman made first base without having to offer at the ball.

"Great eyesight there, old man!" roared Jimmy. "Just as good as a hit. Come on there now, Bung, and help the good cause along. They're skidding fast. The tires 'll blow up in a minute. We only need four to tie and five to win. And here, by the Great Jehosaphat, is the place where we get 'em all—get 'em all—don't forget—get 'em all!"

Dugan whaled the ball a lusty clout that sent it far out into left field. Harriman reached third base and the latter pulled up puffing at second. The Hazeldean stands became a riot of noise. Its blue-and-gold colors fluttered wildly. Adelphi sat silent and strained, certain that its old enemy could not overcome its lead and yet fearing that it might.

"Wow, wow, wow!" bellowed Red-top from the coaching line. "Would you look at that? I've had sore eyes for a week. They're cured right now. Oh, we've cut the ropes and the balloon's going up right away! And it's never going to come down. Keep on pounding, fellows! They're caving! Come on now, Rexy, old boy! Put it where they ain't! H'ist it over the fence! Wow, wow, wow!"

Lord, after several feints, tapped the ball lightly down the third base line. He reached first safely, but there was no chance for a run to score.

"Ha, ha! The good work goes on!" shouted Dalton. "Eat 'em up! Eat 'em up! They're easy now!" Then he burst forth with a new exclamation—one that made every Adelphi man twinge: "The spy team! The spy team! Ha, ha! What good did it do them? They're outclassed, boys—outclassed! Let me now introduce Mr. Henry Galt, ladies and gentlemen and—spies. Spies, I said. S-p-i-e-s! But Henry is not afraid of spies! Are you, Henry? No, Henry is some fence 'buster, folks. Now, just you watch a bit."

Jack Morewood, who had taken up the pitching burden for Adelphi in the seventh inning, looked palpably disturbed by Dalton's onslaught. He fingered the ball nervously, shot a glance at the three Hazeldean base runners jockeying back and forth and then turned with sagging shoulders to his catcher.

"Do you see that?" muttered Tacks Beeston to Tommy Castle up in the stand. "Morewood's losing his nerve. He can't stand the gaff that Dalton is casting out. I'm sorry he was with us on our little kidnaping expedition last evening."

"Steady, steady!" returned his companion. "He'll get back on his feet in a moment. But it was too bad we took him with us. He knows too much just about now."

Galt made a gallant try. His long fly just eluded the outstretched mitt of the Adelphi center fielder, who had to go almost to the fence for it. Harriman scored easily and the other two base runners moved nearer the home plate.

In the din that broke from the Hazeldean adherents Dalton's voice was unrecognizable, but his antics fed the enthusiasm. He galloped up and down the coaching line, turned a handspring and shook one foot in the air and then the other.

"Wow, wow, wow!" Jimmy was yelling when the crowd quieted down. "It's a cinch, fellows, a large, juicy cinch! Eat 'em up! Eat 'em up! Fight 'em! Fight 'em hard!"

"You do it yourself!" laughed the Hazeldean bench players. It's your bat, Jimmy!"

"My turn?" he cried back. "Would you look at it? Three men on and little Jimmy's turn at bat. Made to order by the gods for me!" He hurriedly hefted several bats and picked the likeliest one. He hustled to the plate, apparently as carefree and confident as he would have been with his team ten runs in the lead.

He worried the Adelphi pitcher with his gyrations and his biting comments. He had the throng smiling, despite the tensity of the situation. With two strikes against him he rapped the ball fiercely toward second base. The shortstop had a fair chance to field it cleanly, but it caromed out of his hand and bounded sharply away. Before it was recovered two more Hazeldean runs clattered over the home plate, Henry Galt stood panting on third and Dalton by a daring slide just managed to reach second.

"Ha, ha, ha!" he yelled breathlessly, as he rose to his feet and dusted a cloud from his trousers, "I told you we ha 'em on the run! Fight 'em, fight 'em!" he went on between the billowing cheers from the Hazeldean stands. "We need only one more to tie and two more to win, and here they are on the base. One good punch, now, boys, and they're over!"

Madalyn Lester, in the midst of Adelphi rooters, suddenly found herself clapping her hands at Dalton's feat. Her eyes were shining brilliantly and her cheeks were suffused with pink. Inwardly she was craving a Hazeldean victory.

The punch that Red-top begged for was only a tap. It was a bunt that rolled slowly down toward first base. It enabled Lord to score and Jimmy to reach third, but the batter was out.

The next man sent up a short foul fly that fell only to remain nestled in the enormous mitt of the Adelphi catcher.

Two men out, Dalton on third and one run needed to win. The crisis was so desperate that it held the vast throng of spectators breathless and silent.

Red-top pranced up and down the third base line like a broncho straining at a rope. If he could but score, his beloved college would win. His very heart spoke in the shrill cry he sent up to the next batsman.

"Steady, Black, steady!" he shouted to swarthy little Teddy Carman, the weakest hitter on the team. "Just one nice little hit now and it's over. Take your time and pick out a good one. Don't you dare to miss it."

But Carman took too much time. The first ball pitched to him was sent squarely across the plate, but he let it go by without offering his bat. Then two balls followed. Then another strike that he made a feeble swing at. Then another ball.

Jimmy half decided that he would attempt to steal home. It seemed the only possible way left to win. Carman was unequal to the situation. Then he concluded that the attempt was too desperate. The Adelphi catcher was a marvel at blocking runners away from the home plate.

With agony in his heart he saw Morewood set the ball firmly in his huge pitching hand. He stole a few wary steps farther up the base line as he watched the long fingers grip the sphere tensely. His eyes followed as if fascinated the powerful right arm as it rose in a strong wide swing to deliver the decisive ball.

And then——

Out of the straining mass in the Adelphi stand rose a girlish figure, and in the tense silence a sweet, penetrating voice cut the air like a crack of lightning.

"Oh, the kidnapers, the kidnapers!" was the startling message. "They must not win!"

The words struck Morewood like a blow full in the face. In the supreme instant of the game they cast a momentary, confused blur upon his mind. Indistinctly he imagined that he and his pals in the escapade of the preceding night had been discovered, and that a public and degrading exposure of their complicity was impending.

His face paled, his extended arm faltered and the ball, intended to cut the heart of the plate, dribbled out of his fingers and rolled uncertainly off toward first base.

Dalton, quick to take advantage of the unprecedented situation, raced madly for home. He crossed the plate with the winning run before the panic-stricken Adelphi players could recover the errant ball.

Madalyn Lester sank back in her seat with whitened cheeks, but with eyes gleaming triumph. To her father, who bent over her, half shocked, half anxious, in the wild scene that ensued, she was able to whisper:

"Dad, he deserved to win! Adelphi didn't! I couldn't bear to see him lose!"

Red-top, boosted high on the shoulders of his cheering fellows and with his shock of flaming hair standing up more belligerently than ever, laughed ecstatically:

"She's a peach, fellows, now ain't she?"

While Tacks Beeston, mourning with Tommy Castle the loss of the game and their wagers, muttered sadly:

"That's the first time I ever saw a woman win a baseball game!" Then, as he looked out over the field of yelling and dancing Hazeldean students, he growled ominously: "If I had that squealer Northcote here now, I'd just about choke the last breath out of his body!"

"Aw, no, you wouldn't!" retorted Tommy, sourly. "Come to look it over, we fellows got just about what we deserved."

The End.

Knew Where to Stop.

"The Chinese invented gunpowder, I believe."

"Yes," replied the eminent Oriental. "We invented gunpowder, but we drew the line at the gunman."

Valoroso's Strange Vision

(Continued From Page 13.)

Secret Service man was working; but he knew it would take the utmost care and caution to avoid some slip which might of a sudden knock his bold plan skyhigh.

"Where's your leader?" he demanded again, authoritatively.

One of the gang, evidently chosen spokesman, shuffled forward; with cap in hand he addressed the distinguished visitor.

"Yuh must sort of overlook the welcome give ye, pal," he began, awkwardly, "but you must admit appearances was agin yuh—yuh know that! Now, our leader's out right this minute; we're lookin' for him back soon. Jes' make yerself one of us—feel to home, an' any pointers yuh care to slip us about the work, why, we'll be more'n glad to git!"

The spokesman withdrew, with conscious pride in the successful delivery of such altogether satisfactory remarks. The men resumed their work. Willets was left to roam about as he chose. He was concerned no little in mind as to what the coming meeting with Valoroso would bring forth; he surmised that the wily leader would prove a far different proposition to handle. He made his way slowly over toward the door, thinking perhaps to make a sudden dash out into the night; but each time he neared the exit a number of the counterfeiters, somehow, always barred his way. This, however, he attributed to mere chance, rather than to any scheme or design on their part. Finally, Willets decided that his only course lay in awaiting the coming of the leader, hoping to delude him until an opportunity came to escape from his perilous position.

Ten minutes later Valoroso arrived; Willets studied him closely as the members of the gang drew him to one side to inform him of the visit of the renowned Ned Florence.

The leader was a man of striking personality, of powerful build, yet quick and sure in his movements as some wild animal. His face, notwithstanding the hard, cruel lines, was handsome withal, denoting both intelligence and will power to an unusual degree. Now, as he listened to his men, a storm seemed gathering upon his swarthy countenance. Then, with short, quick strides, he came forward, and stood with folded arms before the Secret Service man. A sinister smile played upon his thin lips. A hush fell upon the gang as they awaited the words of their leader.

The element of personal danger was nothing new to Willets; many times he had faced perilous situations, unshaken; now, however, a chill of apprehension seemed to fasten upon him. The glittering eyes of the outlaw burned into him, and seemed to strangely enervate. The leader spoke; and his tones were soft and velvety, but in their very suavity was a menace that cut like a knife.

"So—we have the renowned counterfeiter with us, have we? Well, Mr. Ned Florence, in behalf of both myself and my men, allow me to say that we are very glad to see you, and you are very welcome in our midst."

He bowed low and with stately grace. Willets felt a thrill of hope arise within him. Surely, this bandit chief was not so wily, not so utterly bad as he had been painted. He started to say something in return; Valoroso raised his hand to restrain him, then resumed in smooth, oily tones:

"Yes, we're uncommon glad to have him with us—this Mr. Ned Florence—so very glad, in fact"—here his voice hardened, and his dark eyes flamed with passion—"so de-lighted, we're goin' to string him up in five minutes!"

CHAPTER IV.

THE leader of the counterfeiters took out his watch, as tho to make exact calculation. His men fell back, amazed at the sudden turn of affairs, stupefied with consuming dread of his wrath. In silence Willets awaited his doom; but as a drowning man grasps at a straw, so he studied this dominant figure before him, his mind active and alert, yet singularly futile to create cause or reason for further respite. A look into the face of the bandit chief seemed sufficient to stifle all hope, to make further scheming useless. His plane of mentality, his power of induction and calculation was far above that of his men; he was not to be fooled or tricked. As Willets looked thus upon him, the words of a recent warning came back to him: "A renegade cutthroat, vain, boastful, superstitious; but . . . clever and resourceful." Yes, the face of Pietro Valoroso showed all of that, and more. It showed an innate power to make men cringe before him. And now the leader suddenly turned to his men and, speaking in Spanish, heaped upon them a torrent of vituperation which flayed and withered, hardened characters tho they were. Then, as tho not having done full justice to the occasion in that language, he went on in furious vehemence:

"You're a fine lot of curs to call yourselves men, ain't you? You sure are a bunch of confidin' critturs, I must say! Ned Florence? He ain't no more Ned Florence than I be! He's a sneakin' hound of a Government spy—that's what he is; and you took him right in and welcomed him. Say, if the sheriff of this here county had come to you tonight, and said to you bunch of ol' women: 'Howdy, friends, I'm the Angel Gabriel,' I actually believe you weak, snivelin' sisters would have said: 'Why, howdy, Gabe! Come right in and hev a chair!'"

He paused and gazed around him in scornful contempt. For an interval the gang stood in sullen silence, then moved by common impulse they sprang forward to wreak their vengeance on the intruder who had brought down upon them the scathing sarcasm and rebuke of their leader. He sprang in front of them.

"No, you don't!" he shouted imperiously. "You've had your set-to with this gentleman; now I have mine!"

They fell back, grumbling, while Valoroso resumed:

"Four of you stand guard over the prisoner, while I'm busy with certain necessary preparations. The rest of you pack up; we're goin' to hit the trail for other parts before daylight!"

Without so much as a glance in the direction of the captive, the leader began occupying himself with the details of the plan his active mind had conceived on the instant.

Even facing death itself, Willets enjoyed one fleeting pleasurable thrill—he had been the means of breaking up the gang's nest at Capistrano! Then his thoughts turned suddenly to Juan Duprez. To what extent, if any, was his guide mixed up with the affairs of this cutthroat—Valoroso? His meditations along this line were cut short by the interest with which he followed the movements of that worthy himself.

The leader had removed one of the heavy revolvers from his belt, the stock of which he fastened securely in an iron vise; then, attaching a string to the hammer, adjusting it carefully so as to leave it carefully poised in the air, he tied the other end of the cord to a nail in the wall. This much accomplished to his exact satisfaction, he ordered Willets strapped to a chair, in which the latter sat facing the loaded revolver, the muzzle pointing at his breast. The chair was nailed to the floor, and made still more secure and immovable by cleats of boards.

The meaning of this carefully arranged setting was soon made clear to the Secret Service man. Valoroso next took a tallow candle from a box under a table; in this, at about mid-section, he cut a notch in which he inserted the cord holding the hammer of the revolver suspended; then he set the candle upon a box, midway between the weapon and the wall, and, with a fiendish leer, lighted the wick. His plan was plain enough to all now. When the tiny flame burned down thru the tallow to the notch, severing the slender cord, the hammer would be released, and, striking the cartridge, would send a bullet into the breast of the victim.

The whole horrible contrivance was quite in keeping with the reputation for brutal deeds and cruelty which Valoroso bore. Now he stood back, and with folded arms gazed at the arrangement with satisfaction and a certain pride in this deadly creation of his brain.

"You will live longer than I first intended," he said, confidingly, to Willets. "Your last moments will be such pleasant ones I shall prolong them some-

(Continued on Page 29)

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Now, in order to earn this beautiful premium chair I simply ask that you distribute 24 large bottles (holding three times as much as our former 25-cent size) for which you collect 50 cents each. Return the $12.00 and the Emblem or Initial Chair is yours.

No Money in Advance—I Guarantee Your Sales

I've told you that my oil is easy to sell. I back up my opinion by sending you the oil without any money in advance. Further, I agree to take it back at my expense if for any reason you can't sell it, and pay you well for what you do sell. I assume all the risk. Can anything be fairer?

You Must Act Quick This is the first full page advertisement of this offer. Previously, however, I presented the proposition to a few of my friends here in Indianapolis. All with one accord pronounced it the most remarkable rocker offer which has ever come to their attention, and some of them now have this chair in their homes. Therefore, basing my opinion on their verdict, I predict an enormous demand for these chairs and I have placed an order large enough, in my opinion, to take care of the initial demand. And I can say to all who act now that I can guarantee each and every one a chair.

However, in view of the unsettled conditions in the furniture industry, it may be impossible to secure any duplicate orders. Or at best I may be able to get them only at a greatly increased price. Therefore I would suggest that all who desire to obtain one of these Emblem or Initial rockers must send in their orders at once. To all such I guarantee to reserve a chair. These chairs are made right here in Indianapolis and there will be no delay in shipping. I guarantee safe delivery.

Act now. Fill in and sign the coupon at the right and be the first to own one of these beautiful chairs.

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The Price of Her Betrayal

(Continued From Page 4.)

had a discussion yesterday about how far it is on a bee line to Mexico. My notion is about sixty miles."

Winant looked straight at him. His answer seemed to be apropos of nothing. "There's a hundred and seven dollars under the mattress in my room, Roady. I owe Jim Henderson three dollars and about a week's board."

Briskly Roady came back to the issue. "Well, I'll say good night. I got to go and report all I know to Keating. I reckon the sheriff will be around to see you both later."

He turned and cantered back toward the little town.

V.

The director pushed a cigar across the table to Roady.

"Sit down, Mac. Got anything on your chest you want to unload?"

The bow-legged rider chewed on the end of his cigar, but did not sit down. His scant white eyebrows were lifted in a question he seemed to find some difficulty in asking.

"Say it," advised Keating, striking a light.

"I'm sorter wondering what kind of a man you are. Course I know you're white. That ain't the point. Are you one of these here sticklers for law? Or do you kinder reckon that circumstances alter cases? Is it justice you want did to a man, or the law and the statutes?"

The producing director looked at the end of his cigar reflectively. "sometimes they do go together, Roady—justice and the law."

"And then again sometimes they travel different trails. Me, I don't rise up on my hind feet and holler for law out of books when I can see better myself what's square and right. Onct in a while some man uses his own judgment and breaks the law to git a scoundrel that can't be touched otherwise. Say this devil kills a woman and kid without ever laying a hand on them. Say the sheriff can't touch him. What then? If some one does justice on him, is it up to you and me to raise a dust about it?"

"Aren't your views rather primitive, Roady? We can't all be a law to ourselves."

The cow puncher leaned across the table, excitement in his mild eyes. "We're talkin' about primitive folks—kind. decent people who have suffered a heap and look at things with a squint because of it, folks that have got loaded up with a notion it's up to them to punish the devil who has ruined the girl they love."

Keating studied his rider with steady, watchful eyes. "I don't think I would be too hard on people of that kind. But I reckon we've covered the ground. Let's hear what you have to tell me."

"First off, I've sold two of the Lunar horses for a hundred dollars. Here's the money."

Roady counted out the bills and put them on the table.

"You been elected director of this company lately, Mac?" asked his friend, with an edge of irony to his voice.

McCarty told his story from beginning to end. Keating listened without comment till he had finished. The director looked at his subordinate curiously and slowly a grin spread over his face.

"You play it safe, Roady, don't you? Your friends are halfway to Mexico by this time. Forty writs of extradition wouldn't bring them back across the border these days. Whether I like it or not doesn't matter a jack straw. They've gone—and so are our horses."

"That's right," agreed the cow puncher amiably.

"So I can come thru with the truth. You've handled this like a Solomon, son. If you had told me first I should have had to turn them over to the sheriff. Now—well, I've got just one thing to say—Horstman got what was coming to him. O' course Winant did wrong, but an Arizona jury would acquit him mighty quick."

They shook hands on that across the table.

Valoroso's Strange Vision

(Continued From Page 27.)

what. Instead of five minutes to live, you are to have thirty!"

He paused and looked at the captive, as tho expecting some plea for mercy to escape the lips of the doomed man. None was forthcoming, and, angered at the other's complacency, he stepped in closer and hissed his threats into the pale face of the victim.

"Know this, senor: In half an hour the flame will burn down thru the string—then the hammer will snap down hard! Meanwhile, you can sit there and watch it working lower—lower—lower each second—those last short seconds of your life! Ha! Then comes the sudden break in the cord—and for you—darkness, senor. No more visits will the renowned 'Ned Florence' make then; his visiting will be over forever! And now, senor—adios."

He turned away with a low, mocking laugh; he allowed none of his men to approach the helpless form strapped there to the chair, facing the revolver with its poised hammer. By blows and threats and curses he urged them on to greater haste in their packing. Ten minutes later the counterfeiters and Pietro Valoroso had departed for fields anew.

The lights in the building were out, all save one—the tiny, flickering flame before the tortured, struggling form in the chair. Lower, lower it sank, nearer each instant to the cord, the severing of which would mean to the suffering victim—eternity.

CHAPTER V.

THRUOUT the house the wind shrieked dismally, rattling the dilapidated window frames as the they were being shaken by angry, unseen hands. A big tawny rat came out of a hole and gazed at Willets with sharp, beady eyes; then, as tho aware of the captive's helpless condition, scampered about unconcernedly in search of food.

Willets had heard it said that a man facing death would recall in rapid succession the events of his past life; he himself, however, experienced no such emotions now. One thought only came to his mind—that of a little woman back in the East, waiting for one who would never return. He wondered, in a vague sort of way, how long it would be before they found him there, strapped to the chair, a bullet wound in his breast; how long she would have to wait in an agony of suspense before even knowing the fate which befell him.

He strained at the thongs, turning and pulling with the might of a doomed man, but all in vain; he could not move an inch from in front of that deadly, gleaming barrel. In his desperation he called out, wildly, frantically, but the shrieking of the wind drowned out the sound of his voice. Bitterly, now, he reproached himself for the carelessness which led to his capture. He had known the character of the ruffian, had been warned by the chief to take no chances; still he had walked blindly into a trap from which there was no escaping.

Lower, lower sank the tiny flame!

He watched it with a sort of stolid fascination; only at intervals now came the realization that an inch lower on the candle meant—the end of life!

At times the little, sputtering glare of light seemed to stand at the same level; again it appeared madly to devour the tallow as tho in eager, frantic haste to reach the fatal string—to put an end to it all. With one last mighty effort he strained against the thongs, and for the last time raised his voice in anguish: "Poor, poor little Jean!" he gasped, and sank back exhausted, all hope forsaken.

At that instant the thongs which bound him parted, and he fell forward limply upon the floor. When he looked up again in dull wonderment, he beheld the tall form of the bandit leader standing at the vise, from which he removed the revolver. Willets attempted to get up; he was numb and trembling, and nearly fell, but Valoroso made no motion to assist him. The leader himself seemed in a terribly shaken state; his face was drawn and haggard and his eyes were in turn fixed and staring, then wildly roving. He acted as one impelled rather than moving of his own volition.

He rubbed his hand across his brow dumbly, then turned a ghastly face toward Willets. "Amigo," he began, tremulously, "I have seen a vision—a vision in white! It was the Lady of the Mission. She raised her arm; she pointed back here to you. She said: 'Go back—go back!'—and I came."

He stooped as one still in a daze and blew out the candle. Before Willets could utter a word, the leader of the counterfeiters—a very changed Valoroso—took his departure for the second time, as suddenly as he had appeared.

Weak and limp, the Secret Service man groped his way to the door. In the east a faint flush of crimson betokened the approaching dawn of another day, and far down the road he heard the sound of clattering hoofs, now fainter—fainter—until finally the sound died away in the distance.

CHAPTER VI.

AT THE Blue Moon cantina Juan Durprez sat upon a table playing his guitar and singing with fervent soulfulness. Outside, the sun, high in the sky, beat down upon Capistrano's sandy street, along which came presently Stanlow Willets in quest of his guide. Juan saw him coming and ran forth to meet him.

"Ah, senor," he began, after customary greetings, "Such news—such wonderful things have happened since I saw you last night!"

They sat down on a bench in the shade of a pepper tree.

"What has happened, Juan?" asked Willets.

"Valoroso and his band have gone! They were seen far away on the trail leading straight for Mexico. And now that you may understand better I must tell you what happened six weeks ago. Quite by accident I came upon the gang of counterfeiters in the old deserted mansion in the eucalyptus grove. Valoroso let me go—with the warning that if I ever even breathed his name to any one he would steal Anita and carry her away. That is why I would never talk of him when you asked me, senor!"

"I remember that, Juan."

The guide placed a swarthy forefinger alongside his nose and winked ceremoniously to prepare Willets for the

(Continued on Page 30.)

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This picture shows one of our friends driving an automobile. In the scenery and around the automobile are six partly hidden faces which if you will be lots of fun for you to find. Can you find them? Try it. It will pay you. When you have found four of the faces, mark each with a cross (X), cut out the advertisement and mail it to us and inclose four cents in stamps for packing, postage, mailing, etc., and a beautiful free surprise present will be sent you. You will delight in owning this present.

AUTOMOBILE GIVEN AWAY

We will also make you a present of a Certificate of Entry for 2,000 free auto votes and tell you all about this splendid touring car which we are going to give away free.

MEN, WOMEN, BOYS AND GIRLS—You can also win an automobile in addition to splendid prizes such as phonographs, jewelry, silverware, bicycles, watches, cameras, and other things you like. We will also send you a copy of two great national publications worth ten cents. Write your name and address plainly, and inclose the four cents in stamps for packing, mailing, etc., of the free surprise present.

AUTO PUZZLE DEPT. D, W. D. BOYCE CO., 500 NORTH DEARBORN ST., CHICAGO, ILL.

While They Last!

Pillow Outfit Free

THE above illustration does not begin to give you an adequate idea of the beautiful design of these pillow tops, for they are of the most gorgeous colors imaginable. They are a prize for any one with an eye for beauty, for one will do more to brighten up the parlor than an armful of pictures. This design is especially appropriate now, when so many sons and husbands are leaving their homes to defend their loved ones. They will always be thinking of their homes, no matter how humble or palatial they may be.

This pillow outfit includes a pillow top of the very highest grade of ten colors, and measures 20"x20". The design is in five colors, and enough mercerized floss is furnished to work out the design to the best effect. A pillow-back of the same material is supplied, and to make the outfit complete we are giving a package of needles.

How to Get This Outfit Free!

The complete outfit, including pillow top and back, 6 skeins of mercerized floss and a package of embroidery needles, will be given FREE to any one sending $1.50 to the address below, for a year's subscription to the Chicago Ledger, either new or renewal.

Fill out the coupon and send it in with your money order, and your complete outfit will be sent. We guarantee that you will be more than delighted.

W. D. BOYCE CO.,
500 N. Dearborn St., CHICAGO

COUPON

(Fill out and inclose with $1.50 for year's subscription to Chicago Ledger and get the pillow outfit FREE.)

W. D. BOYCE CO., 500 N. Dearborn St., Chicago.

Gentlemen: Inclosed please find $1.50 for a year's subscription to the Chicago Ledger (52 issues). This is

a _____ subscription.
(new or renewal)

Please send me free of all charges a pillow top, back and outfit.

Name .....

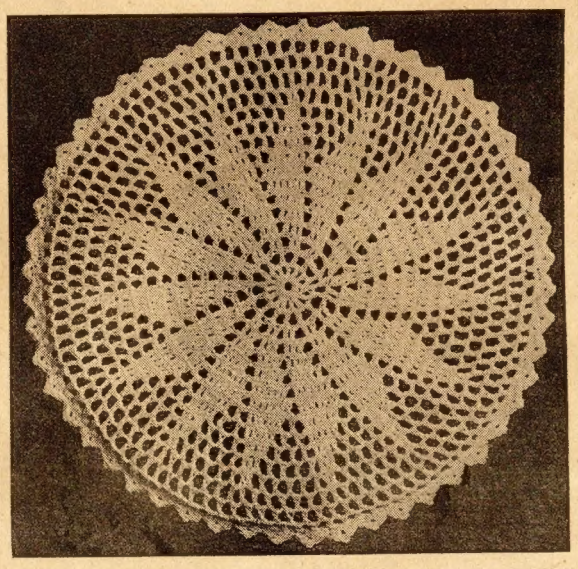
St. No., P. O. or R. F. D. .....

Town .....

Box No..... State.....

Crocheted Table Mats

EVERY housekeeper who has once been the happy possessor of a set of crocheted table mats will be interested in making another set of different stitch and shape. These round mats are not difficult to shape, as are so many of the fancy shapes. The crochet work is so simple that many of the schoolgirls are making them as gifts. Use size 10 mercerized crochet cotton, a medium sized hook and asbestos mats for the foundations, two, three or four sizes making the set.



They average one ball of cotton for a mat; the largest size of four sizes, about 10½ inches in diameter, requires a little more than one ball; but the smallest size, 5 inches, does not use a full ball. The mat shown here is the medium size.

Start with 7 ch sts, join into a circle, 4 ch sts.

First Row—* 1 d c into circle, 1 ch st, repeat * until you have 14 d c, join to the 4 ch sts, 5 ch sts.

Second Row—* 1 d c, 2 ch sts, repeat * over each ch of previous row, join, 4 ch sts.

Third Row—1 d c into first d c, 2 ch sts, * 1 d c into next d c, 1 d c into next st, 2 ch sts, repeat *.

Fourth Row—* 1 d c into each d c, 1 d c into next st, making 3 d c in a gr, 2 ch sts, repeat *.

Continue making 1 extra d c on each gr for each row until you have completed the 8th row, where 7 d c form each gr.

Ninth Row—* 6 d c, 1 ch st, skip 1 d c, make 1 d c into first ch st, 2 ch sts, repeat *.

Tenth Row—* 5 d c, 1 ch st, skip 1 d c, make 1 d c into first ch st, ** 2 ch sts, 1 d c over next ch, repeat ** twice, then repeat *.

For the Next 4 Rows—Drop 1 d c on each gr and add 1 sp (2 ch sts, 1 d c) for each d c dropped.

Fifteenth Row—Sps, completing the pattern, add as many rows of sps as are necessary to cover the mat.

For the Scallop—* 2 d c, 3 ch sts form 1 p, 2 d c all over first sp, 1 s c over next sp, repeat *.

Turn to the back of the mat and make 3 rows of sps.

Cover the asbestos mat with white shaker or outing flannel, then cover with the crochet and run a length of ch sts thru the last row of sps and tie into a bow knot. This can be easily removed to launder, as can also the inside cover.

In making the largest size mat, if desired, one can add 1 row to the gr after the 8th row, before decreasing the d c; this will add 2 rows to the length of the points and decrease the rows of sps required to cover the mat. The same can be done for the smallest mat by omitting the 8th row and decreasing from the gr of 6 d c.

Dainty Handkerchiefs

ONE need never feel at a loss for something to give for a small remembrance, for a dainty handkerchief, if the material is sheer and the work neatly done, is always acceptable, and one cannot have too many. Of a piece of handkerchief linen twelve inches square, roll the hem. Over this crochet with No. 70 to No. 100 mercerized crochet cotton, making one row of si cr., close together around the four sides of the linen. This forms the foundation for any small pattern of crocheting one cares to add. For example, * 3 si cr, 3 ch sts, forming a p, repeat *, makes a very neat border.

Another simple edge is 5 do cr, 1 p, repeated around the handkerchief. Another is * 3 ch sts, skip 1 st, 1 si cr, 1 ch st, turn, 1 si cr, 1 do cr, 1 tr cr, all over the 3 ch sts, 1 si cr, into next st, repeat *; this forms what is known as the Armenian edge. This is very effective for edging baby yokes, neck and sleeves of baby dresses, collars of crepe de chine or fine lawn or embroidered collar and cuff sets.

Any of the above patterns can be made of white or any of the dainty shades. On the small spools many of the firms are putting up No. 70 mercerized cotton expressly for making tatting and fine edges; these come in plain shades and also in shades from light to dark of the same color. This is very pleasing as handkerchief edges. If desired, one can embroider the initial in plain color in one corner to match the lace edge.

One of these handkerchiefs, neatly folded and tied with baby ribbon to match, makes an inexpensive and useful remembrance. If one were not handy and had to purchase the same article they would come rather high if one has several gifts on her list.

Embroideries in Black.

ONE of the novelties in the embroidery line is the work on black linen or canvas. The colored embroidery on this somber background is particularly rich and effective, and the color scheme can easily be made to match any room or combination of color schemes.

The long, flat pillows which are so much used on the built-in benches about the fireplace are extremely attractive in black linen decorated with bright red Oriental poppies, or with a colorful combination of field flowers. Then a scarf to match for the library table is good, and perhaps an embroidered cover for a telephone book.

The effect of these black embroideries is not at all depressing. On the contrary, they are very rich and warm-looking and add just the attractive note of somberness.

Satin Stitch Returns.

IN THE matter of stitches we are returning once more to the styles of almost half a century ago. For the old-fashioned satin stitch has returned with renewed beauty.

In some instances it is done with the extremely fine silk which was practically the only embroidery floss used or known by our grandmothers, and in others, it is done with very heavy mercerized floss in large, splashy patterns.

As a result of this difference in treatment and materials, some of the embroidery is delicate and as finely tinted as a bit of china; this is mostly used for small table centers and purely ornamental pieces.

CLASSIFIED WANT ADS

TOBACCO HABIT

TOBACCO OR SNUFF HABIT CURED OR no pay. $1.00 if cured. Remedy sent on trial. Superba Co., TC, Baltimore, Md.

BOYS AND GIRLS

GUARANTEED WATCH OR GOLD PLATED bracelet free to boys and girls for placing sample packet seeds with friends. Eckert Seed Co., B-21, Cly, Pa.

UNDERGROUND TREASURES

UNDERGROUND TREASURES—HOW AND where to find them. Particulars for stamp. Bee Company, Kansas City, Missouri.

Valoroso's Strange Vision

(Continued From Page 29.)

stupendous news about to be imparted. Then he said:

"Somehow, senor, the parents of Anita think that it was me who frightened Pietro Valoroso and his gang away! This morning they look upon me as a great man—a brave man. They insist that I marry their daughter! They crave that honor! We are to be married——"

"But, Juan," Willets broke in, wonderingly, "what do you know about the departure of Valoroso, or the reason for the gang's breaking up?"

"Little enough, senor—only this: Last night when I left you with the burros at the mission——"

"Yes, yes!"

"It was to go in search of a love note Anita had promised to hide there for me, senor. I found the note; in it she said she would meet me there at the old mission between 10 and 11 o'clock, if she could get away from home. Well, she reached the place appointed before I did; but she was not afraid, and waited. Suddenly a horseman drew near. Thinking it must be me, she ran out from behind the wall to meet him. Then—Madre de Jesu—it was Pietro Valoroso! She remembered his threats to carry her away; she was frightened nearly to death; she raised her hand, and shrieked at him: 'Go back! Go back!' Then, senor—wonder of wonders!—as tho he had seen a ghost, he turned about and galloped away. That is all I know about it, senor."

Willets, with his inside knowledge of certain recent events, had a clearer understanding; but he kept his own counsel.

"And now, senor," went on Juan Duprez, with animation, "if her parents believe that I drove him away—that he vanished thru fear of me—is it for me to deny that such is the case? Should I not, instead, be grateful for what the Saints have done—and say nothing?"

Willets reached over and grasped the hand of his guide.

"Juan Duprez," he said, "we should—all of us—be grateful for what the Saints have done, and had better let it go at that."

"Declined With Agony."

BRITISH editors do not as a rule waste words in rejecting a would-be contributor's masterpieces. But in China it is even more delightful to have a rejection than to receive an acceptance. If the story, article or poem is accepted, little or nothing is said; but if the manuscript is rejected, the editor will write a letter with the rejected screed something like this:

"We have read thy manuscript with infinite delight. By the sacred ashes of our ancestors, we swear that never before have we reveled in so enthralling a masterpiece. If we printed it we should henceforth be obliged to take it as a model, as a standard of quality and achievement, and henceforth never print anything inferior to it. As it would be impossible to find its equal in 10,000 years, and we have to go to press with our poor, uninspired paper once a day, we are compelled, tho shaken with sorrow and blinded with tears at the necessity, to return thy divine manuscript, and for doing so we ask thee a thousand pardons."

Not His Heart.

REGINALD had become a stretcher bearer in the Army pay corps, and before going away to take up his duties he asked Angelina to marry him. Angelina loved him, but as she had promised to marry a millionaire the day before she was too noble to go back on her word, and to Reginald she had perforce to say "No."

"I'm sorry, sorry," she sobbed. "K-kiss me once before we part, my love," and she flung herself into his arms.

"My own," she wailed. "Have I broken your heart?"

Reginald disentangled himself with difficulty.

"No, Angelina," he said, "only my fountain pen!"

CLASSIFIED WANT ADS

Classified Want Ad Information If you have hesitated to try Classified Advertising for fear your lack of experience in writing advertisements might stand in your way you need delay no longer. Just write a letter to the Classified Dept., W. D. Boyce Co., 500 N. Dearborn St., Chicago, Ill. State fully what you wish to advertise and the amount of money you can devote to it. Copy will at once be submitted for your approval. Rate 30c a word. Not less than 14 words accepted.
W. D. BOYCE COMPANY, Publisher

SALESMEN WANTED

SALESMEN AND SERVICE MEN—NEW Carburetor for Ford cars. Simple, not a moving part, installed in thirty minutes, guaranteed to double your mileage and start in zero weather without heating or priming. 16 day free trial. Write, U. & J. Carburetor Co., 503L, Jackson Blvd., Chicago.

AGENTS WANTED

AGENTS: BIG HIT: OUR 5 PIECE ALUMINUM Set is all the rage. Cheaper than enamel ware. Sells like wildfire. Guaranteed 20 years. Retail value $5.00. You sell to housewives for only $1.98. Biggest seller of the age, 9 sure sales out of every 10 shown. Others cleaning up $10.00 to $20.00 a day. Answer this quick to secure your territory. Div. N. N. 5, American Aluminum Mfg. Co., Lemont, Ill.

$65.00 A WEEK AND YOUR SUIT FREE. You can earn this and even more if you take advantage of our startling offer. Write us at once, and we will send you a full line of samples and everything necessary to start at once, absolutely free, postage prepaid. Spencer Mead Company, Dept. 1178, Chicago.

AGENTS—$60 WEEKLY AND AUTOMOBILE furnished men placing samples wonderful new automobile necessity with automobile owners. Reduces operating expense. Makes old cars run like new. $30 outfit furnished free. L. Ballwey, 7, Sta. F., Louisville, Ky.

BILLY SUNDAY'S OWN BOOK. GREAT opportunity for the first man or woman in each county to make big money quick selling this grand authorized book. Experience unnecessary. Send 15 cents for postage of free sample book. Star Publishing Co., 501 Plymouth Court, Chicago.

AGENTS—$60 A WEEK TO SPECIAL Agents to travel by automobile selling our line of new patented household specialties. We furnish automobile free. Write today for particulars. American Products Co., 5054 3rd St., Cincinnati, O.

233% PROFIT SELLING JUBILEE Spark Intensifiers to automobile owners, garages. Banishes spark plug troubles. Sells like wild-fire. Exclusive territory. Write quick. Jubilee Mfg. Co., Dept. G-4, Omaha, Neb.

AGENTS: SELL RICH-LOOKING IMPORTED 36x68 rugs, $1 each. Carter, Tenn., sold 118 in four days; you can do same. Write for sample offer selling plan; exclusive territory; sample rug by parcel post prepaid 98c. Condon, Importer, Maine, Neb.

WE START YOU IN BUSINESS, FURNISHing everything; men and women, $30.00 to $200.00 weekly operating our "New System Specialty Candy Factories," home anywhere. Opportunity lifetime; booklet free. Z. Ragsdale Co., East Orange, N. J.

GET DAVIS' 1915 PROSPERITY OFFER—best in 21 years—our food, soap and toilet goods at store prices 1-3 to 1-2. Everybody buys to lower living cost. E. M. Davis, Dept. 2022, 414 Lake St., Chicago.

AGENTS—A NEW ONE! HARPER'S FIBRE Broom and Ten-Use Brush Set Combined. Saves broom, brush money. Lightens housework; easy seller; first order returnable. Harper Brush Works, Dep't. B, Fairfield, Ia.

PANTS $1.00, SUIT $3.75, MADE TO MEASure. For even a better offer than this write and ask for free samples and new styles. Knickerbocker Tailoring Co., Dept. 981, Chicago, Ill.

$1.95 FOR MEN'S MADE-TO-ORDER pants—worth $5.00. Sample free. Money-making offer for agents, part time or all. Write today. Chicago Tailors' Association, Dept. C28, 515 So. Franklin St., Chicago.

VILLAGE AND COUNTRY HOMES WANT Perfection Indoor Toilets. Health authorities endorse. Guaranteed. Big success. Chemical Toilet Mfg. Co., 2606 S. Salina St., Syracuse, N. Y.

AGENTS: ONLY THOSE OF ABILITY NEED apply. Splendid offer for right man. Non Alcoholic drinks, extracts, medicinal preparations, perfumes sold on new plan. Arrow Products Co., Peoria, Ill.

AGENTS CLEARING HUNDREDS WEEKLY. New washing compound. Wonderful seller. Big repeater. Send for proof, free sample. D. Mitchell, 1314 East 61st St., Chicago.

EARN $5 DAILY SELLING PECK'S PERfect Egg Saver. Sample 10c; premiums given. Peck Specialty Co., North Haven, Conn.

WE START YOU WITHOUT A DOLLAR—Soaps, extracts, perfumes, toilet goods. Experience unnecessary. Carnation Co., 28 E. Main, St. Louis.

AGENTS—$30 TO $100 A WEEK. FREE samples gold sign letters for stores and office windows. Liberal offer to general agents. Metallic Letter Co., 416 N. Clark, Chicago.

AGENTS—I'VE A NEW SOAP GAME that's a dandy. New stuff; 100% profits. Sample and full layout free. Write—quick. Lacassian Co., Dept. 21, St. Louis, Mo.

REMNANT STORE, CINCINNATI, OHIO. Greatest dry goods bargains on earth. Agents and store keepers supplied.

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EVERY READER OF THE LEDGER OUGHT to read these ads. Every week splendid chances to make money—to better yourself—to buy, sell or exchange goods or services, are offered here.

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FIREMEN, BRAKEMEN, BAGGAGEMEN, 8 hours, $140. Colored porters wanted everywhere. Experience unnecessary. 636 Ry. Bureau, East St. Louis, Ills.

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BE A DETECTIVE. EXCELLENT OPPORtunity, good pay, travel. Write C. T. Ludwig, 320 Westover Bldg., Kansas City, Mo.

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DO YOU WANT $2,000 A YEAR INCOME without any work, worry or inconvenience? Then investigate our co-operative fig orchard enterprise. $5 starts you owning a fine Magnolia Fig Orchard and interest in co-operative preserving factory. Best figs grown. Estimated profits from 5 acre orchard $2,325.00 annually, or more. Demand for Magnolia Figs cannot be supplied on account of the limited area for growing and lack of facilities for preserving fruit for the market. Best investment on earth. Assures you an orchard home in the most fascinating country in the world and independent income for life. Present offer limited. Our Free book tells all. Send for it today. Address, Gulf Coast Fig Orchards Association, 533, Dept. 33, Merchants Bank Building, Indianapolis, Ind.

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$20 BUYS DEED TO LAND, ALSO INTERest in oil well that should pay you $100 for every dollar invested; payments $2 monthly. Complete information free. Address, Texas-Gulf Company, 1105 Union Bank, Houston, Texas.

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LANDOLOGY, A MAGAZINE GIVING THE facts in regard to the land situation. Three months' subscription, free. If for a home or as an investment you are thinking of buying good farm lands, simply write me a letter and say, "Mail me Landology and all particulars free." Address Editor, Landology, Skidmore Land Co., 26 Skidmore Bldg., Marinette, Wis.

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DO YOU WANT A FARM WHERE LARGEST profits are made? The South's great variety of crops and wonderfully productive climate make it the most profitable farm section of America. It is the place for the lowest cost meat production and dairy farming. It grows the largest variety of forage crops. Good lands in good localities, as low as $15 to $25 an acre. Let us show you locations that will give the highest profits. M. V. Richards, Commissioner, Room 5, Southern Railway System, Washington, D. C.

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MANUFACTURER WILL BUY OR MAKE practical invention; describe. Manager, 905 Webster Building, Chicago, Ill.

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SUFFERERS FROM NERVOUS, WEAK, run down conditions should take Juven Pills. They accomplish marvelous results. This medicine has more rejuvenating, vitalizing force than has ever before been offered. Sent postpaid only by receipt of this advertisement and $5, by C. I. Hood Co., proprietors Hood's Sarsaparilla, Lowell, Mass. (Z.R.)

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MEN ON THE DOWN GRADE, REMEMBER we cure varicocele, stricture, chronic, nervous, blood, kidney, bladder and private diseases. Book symptom blank and advice free, sealed. Hinze Medical Institute, 23 Washington Ave. So., Minneapolis, Minn.

MARRY. THOUSANDS CONGENIAL PEOple, worth from $1,000 to $50,000 seeking early marriage; descriptions, photos, introductions free. Sealed. Either sex. Send no money. Address Standard Cor. Club, Grayslake, Ill.

A LETTER TO DR. ROWE, THE SPECIAList, brings his serial No. 1 on Varicocele, stricture & urinary diseases; every man should have it. Postage 4c. Send to day. Dr. Rowe, 112 North Pearl St., Buffalo, N. Y.

MARRY — FREE PHOTOS, BEAUTIFUL ladies; descriptions and directory pay when married. New Plan Co., Dept. 21, Kansas City, Mo.

MARRY—MARRIAGE DIRECTORY WITH photos and description Free. Pay when married. The Exchange, Dept. 28, Kansas City, Mo.

LIFE READING, PHOTO POSTALS, SEcret conversation cards and lovely present, only 13c in stamps. D. Union Supply Co., Palatine, Ill.

FREE TO LADIES—SAMPLE GREATEST and most effective remedy known for the removal of superfluous hair. Box 51, Haddon Heights, N. J.

MARRY IF LONELY; MOST SUCCESSFUL "Home Maker;" hundreds rich; confidential; reliable; descriptions free. "The Successful Club," Box 556, Oakland, Calif.

YOUNG MAIDEN, 20, WORTH $150,000, man. K. Warn, 2216½ Temple St., Los Angeles, Cal.

HAVE SWEETHEARTS EVERYWHERE. Exchange postcards and letters. Membership 10c. Quality Club, Terre Haute Indiana.

PEPPY PICTURES! BEAUTIFUL GIRLS. Delightful poses. Six for 25c (coin). Franque & Henri, 361 West 57th St., New York.

10 LARGE "WOMAN BEAUTIFUL" poses. Five poems men like. Gentlemen's article and catalog all postpaid 25c. Rick Company, Logansport, Ind.

GET MARRIED — BEST MATRIMONIAL magazine published mailed free. Ladies, send description, age. American Distributor, Blairsville, Pennsylvania.

FOR SPEEDY MARRIAGE, BEST, LARGEST in country. Established 12 years. Thousands wealthy, confidential descriptions free. Reliable Club, Mrs. Wrubel, Oakland, Calif.

LONELY MAIDEN, 27, WOULD CORREspond with respectable gentleman. Object matrimony. B. L., Box 150, Syracuse, N. Y.

GET MARRIED—BEST MATRIMONIAL PAper published. Free for stamp. Correspondent, Toledo, Ohio.

MARRIAGE PAPER WITH NAMES, ADdresses, photos, descriptions, sealed 25c. Box 2265 B, Boston, Mass.

JOIN! LOVERS CORRESPONDING CLUB. Membership 25c. Copy 20c, year $1.00. Sarvis, Barnes City, Iowa.

"FROM THE BALLROOM TO HELL" mailed anywhere, 25c. L. E. Muncy, 136 E. Pleasant Ave., Av. Syracuse, N. Y.

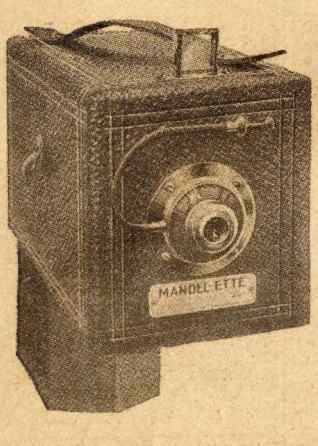
WILL YOU WRITE TO LONELY YOUNG widow worth $35,000. Object, matrimony. Mary, Box 584, Los Angeles, Cal.

MEN SUFFERING WITH WEAKNESS, ADdress, Box 200, Sacramento, Pa., for free information. Mailed sealed.

MARRY RICH. HUNDREDS ANXIOUS TO marry. Descriptions and photos free. E. Unity, Grand Rapids, Mich.

No Money In Advance

This Marvelous CAMERA On FREE TRIAL!



Only 10,000 of these marvelous, instantaneous picture-taking and making cameras to be sent out absolutely on approval without a penny in advance just to prove that it is the most wonderful invention—the camera sensation of the age. So **you** must send for it **quick!** Just think of it—the new Mandel-ette

Takes and Makes Finished Pictures INSTANTLY!

You press the button, drop card in developer and in **one minute** take out a **perfect, finished** post card photo 2½x3½ inches in size. Camera, itself, is about 4½x5x7 inches. Loads in daylight 16 to 50 post cards at one time.

No Films—No Plates—No Dark Room

Not a bit of the muss and bother of the ordinary kodak or camera. It is instantaneous photography! Universal focus lens produces sharp pictures at all distances. Pictures develop and print automatically. Can't overdevelop. Results positively amazing.

We Trust You

No difference who you are, where you live or what your age, we will send you the complete "mandel-ette" outfit absolutely on approval and give you 10 days to test it. If not satisfactory return it. But when you see what elegant pictures it takes—so quick, so easy, with no trouble at all—if you wish to keep it you simply send us $1 per month until our special price of only $5.50 is paid.

Easy Payments—No Reference

No red tape of any kind. Monthly payments so small you'll not notice them. Simply fill out and send coupon today. Send no money. No references required. Lots of fun and big profits.

No Experience Required

Plain instructions and everything complete with outfit so you can begin taking pictures the moment it arrives. We guarantee that even a child can operate it. Mail coupon now. No risk or obligation to keep camera.

Chicago Ferrotype Company,
Desk 199 Ferrotype Bldg., Chicago, Ill.

WOULDN'T TAKE $50 FOR MY "MANDEL-ETTE"

I received the "Mandel-ette" Camera yesterday and am well pleased with it. Learned how to make good pictures in an hour and would not take $50 for it if I could not get another one.
Alfred L. Dustman, Berlin Center, Ohio.

IT'S A WONDER

The "Mandel-ette" safely at hand, and I am getting fine pictures "first crack out of the box." It's a wonder and I anticipate much pleasure in operating it.
W. H. Starkweather,
Wisconsin Veterans' Home, Wis.

$14 IN 5 HOURS

The "Mandel-ette" Camera I got from you some time ago is a wonder. I took in $14 in about five hours with it on the 4th.
C. A. Sund, Blabon, N. Dak.

EVERYBODY LIKES IT

I received my "Mandel-ette" some time ago. It was in good shape and everything O. K. I am well pleased with it. Everybody likes it.
A. A. Newhall, Surf, Calif.

BEST CAMERA IN THE WORLD

I am so well pleased with the "Mandel-ette" that I would not take $25 for it if I could not get another like it. I know that when people learn the "Mandel-ette" process they will never be satisfied with the old plate and film cameras and there will be a big demand for the best camera in the world, "Mandel-ette."
A. H. Hoffman, Wildomar, Calif.

SURELY A WONDER

Received "Mandel-ette" as per agreement, and gentlemen, I wish to express my gratitude, most fully, for your prompt attention to my request.
I have already taken a few pictures with your camera, and I am forced to admit, that your so called "Mandel-ette" is most surely a Wonder. Arthur Hawthorn Lee,
Coalspur, Alberta

FINE RESULTS AT FIRST ATTEMPT

I received the camera all O. K. and I was surprised to see the results of the first attempts I made to turn out a photo. The "Mandel-ette" is one certainly worth the money and will do all you claim for it and even more. James Colyer, Monroe, Iowa.

GREAT PLEASURE WITH HIS

The Camera is certainly a dandy. I was surprised to know that it could take a photo so fast. I have had great pleasure with it. Everybody thinks it is the only thing.
Fred Witte, Central Point, Oregon

REMARKABLY CLEAR PICTURES

I received the "Mandel-ette" some time ago and am having all kinds of fun with it. It takes remarkably clear pictures. The "Mandel-ette" needs no recommendation. I just show the pictures to my friends and they all understand at once what a fine camera it is.
Gertrude E. Gesler, Bangor, Wis.

CAN'T BE BEAT

I beg to thank you for your "Mandel-ette". I got it all right. It is a daisy. The machine can't be beat, there is nothing like it.
James McDowell, Bismark, Mo.

PLEASED

Received my "Mandel-ette" on Saturday and am well pleased with it. I have never taken a camera or kodak picture before but my pictures were good. I would recommend the "Mandel-ette" to anybody wanting a good, inexpensive camera.
Margaret Smithe, Dexter, Mo.

$8 IN 4 HOURS—COULD HAVE MADE MORE

I got the "Mandel-ette" on Friday evening and started work on Saturday morning. Made $8 the first four hours and run out of cards. Could have made that much more if I had cards. Harry Singleton, Claysburg, Pa.

PICTURES A SURPRISE

Am well pleased with the "Mandel-ette" Had no previous experience with cameras or kodaks before but found the "Mandel-ette" very easy to operate. It does all you claim for it—the "One Minute" pictures are a surprise to everyone. Thank you for your promptness in sending the camera and supplies.
Mrs. Anna Hegner, Beaver Falls, Pa.

SURPRISED ABBOTT

I received my "Mandel-ette" and full equipment in fine condition. Have made several pictures, which surprised me, they being so natural. I have no knowledge of photography whatever, but made fine pictures at first attempt.
I expect to have lots of fun with my "Mandel-ette" in the future.
Horace B. Abbot, Beaukies, Texas

Chicago Ferrotype Co.,
Desk 199 Ferrotype Bldg., Chicago, Ill.

Send me at once one complete model Mandel-ette Camera outfit including supply of post cards and instructions. I agree to examine and test it thoroughly and if satisfied keep it and pay you $1 a month until your special price of $5.50 is paid. Otherwise I will return it at the end of 10 days.

Name .....

Street and No .....

Town ..... State .....